Encounter

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毛主席语录
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Lenin and his Critics
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Edited by Melvin J Lasky & Nigel Dennis

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Encounter

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D. W. Brogan

U.S.A. & de Gaulle

Letter from America

A FEW WEEKS AGO, a New York pub owner (he thinks "pub" is a smarter name than "tavern") poured his French wines into the street, coerced his wife into giving up French perfume and got applause from most, though not all spectators on Second Avenue and 88th Street. Not all, for an anguished young man cried out "Not the Burgundy, not the Burgundy," but Mr. Joe Carroll, whose face would seem natural in any Dublin "boozer," was adamant. Why? "He's attacked our dollar and our foreign policy and he pulled out of NATO. And there's no way of getting back at him." The reporter was rather cynical. He noted that one patriotic lady announced that she wouldn't give her beagle any of the wine and "he loves whisky and wine." Another patriotic lady also approved. She wanted to beat de Gaulle's brains in. "He's a Nazi." She had earlier, the reporter told us, wanted to have the eyes of draft-card burners put out. The patriotic Mr. Carroll, under questioning, admitted he was keeping his French brandy for his private use, but had no doubt that his patriotic gesture was what was needed.

Nonsensical episodes of this kind occur every day. The owner of the building which houses the French consulate in Boston has asserted he's going to charge the consul the rent ($7,500) in gold. Even Princess Grace of Monaco (*née* Kelly) blames the General for making the Riviera unpopular and the French press for making "the Vietcong look like heroes and the Americans like simple aggressors." Since she uttered these proper sentiments, the Princess of Monaco—and all the Riviera magnates—has been threatened by far more important anti-French sanctions from which Monaco will not be excepted if the Johnson-Fowler tax on American tourists is imposed. And it is to be feared that French views about the Viet Nam war are less designed for American comfort than ever.

It is, of course, easy to write all this off as mere pique, as another example of the American passion for asking other people to "stand up and be counted" and let it go at that. It is easy to point out that the crime of General de Gaulle, for many protesting Americans, is at least as much his attitude to Israel as his attitude to the United States. A long list of dealers in what used to be called "notions" was not only full of Jewish names but specifically mentioned the wrongs of Israel in the general blast against de Gaulle. It is even possible to see some special interests involved. Thus "Kutsher's Country Club" advertises that "there are so many great comedians at Kutsher's during Balance-of-Payments Month that General de Gaulle is beginning to cry." I doubt if many normal American tourists to France will substitute Kutsher's for the *côte d'azur* even if "the gals" are given American perfume free and there is wine on the house "every nite." (It is a century since Mark Twain satirised the American belief that drinking wine daily was a sign of immense social flair or devilish abandon.) Perhaps Mr. Kutsher doesn't really expect fugitives from the *Pyramide* or the *Tour d'Argent* to flock to Monticello (New York) to feast on New York champagne. He has simply put a patriotic gloss on his annual sales talk. As usual, Art Buchwald has found the real patriotic formula for Americans who weren't going to France anyway, but who can cut out French fried potatoes, French cuffs, French heels, etc.

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AGAINST THIS WAVE of nonsense, the still small voices that point out that France buys twice as much from the United States as she sells are little heard except in Wall Street, the Treasury, or where the gnomes of the Federal Reserve Bank gather.

The campaign, of course, has its set-backs. Not only have many leaders of the jet set and the *most* beautiful people announced that they are going to Europe, balance of payments or total national bankruptcy or no, but the Berlitz Schools are still plugging, in large letters, French as *the* language to learn and the President of Columbia University has just become the President of the *Lycée Français* in New York. *Le Pavillon* is anxiously assuring its old clientele that effete French food will be served under the new management and no smart restaurant has stopped printing its menus in French or has tried to find French equivalents for hominy grits.

AT ANOTHER LEVEL, voices plead for sanity. It is not the French who have most recently been lecturing the Americans on their bad financial habits. Nothing that M. Debré has said is more severe than the homily recently delivered by Herr Otmar Emminger. It was the gnomes of Basle who sent Mr. Frederick Deming back to Washington with, at any rate, a small flea in his ear and it has been that admirable paper, *The Wall Street Journal*, which has pondered on the effects of seventeen budget deficits in nineteen years. But America, bewitched and bewildered and more jittery than I remember it at the darkest periods of World War II and the Korean War, needs a black villain as they were needed in old-fashioned westerns and General de Gaulle is a more unmitigated villain than Billy the Kid, John Wesley Hardin or Clyde Barrow.

There is something alarming about this failure of nerve in the richest and most powerful nation in the world and, driven by natural revulsion from the facts, from the impact of what looks, at the moment, like the most disastrous and pointless war in American history, the Americans are forced to invent a foreign villain who is not Ho Chi Minh but Charles de Gaulle.

One of the oddities of this distressing situation is that nobody, to my knowledge, has attacked General de Gaulle where he is vulnerable in the history of Viet Nam. It could be argued that by his dispatch of that militant monk, Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu, to Indo-China, the General, in his first brief period of office after the last war, threw away any chance of making a deal with Ho Chi Minh before the Chinese Communists had won their war against the Kuomintang, a deal which *might* have produced a kind of Titoesque state in Viet Nam or, possibly, over all French Indo-China. But Americans who think, with Secretary Rusk, of a monolithic Communist world power cannot reproach the General for clinging to the tattered fabric of the French empire when a very unsatisfactory deal was all that could have been hoped for.

But the resentment of the General's attitude to American policy has nothing to do with his leaving to the Americans an insoluble problem, (insoluble in American terms). Again, a good case can be made against French policy, not specifically the General's policy. The French (like the Dutch in Indonesia) did not create an adequate infra-structure in Indo-China, as, to a great extent, the British did in India. The Emperor Bao Dai was deliberately miseducated by his French mentors so that he would not become a nuisance to them—with the result that he was unusable when the French badly needed a rival centre of nationalist feeling to that provided by Ho Chi Minh.[1] And as Churchill noted after World War II, it was absurd for the French to think that they could stay as old imperial masters, when the more deeply rooted and unconquered British had decided to go. But all this adds up to a charge that the French left a *damnosa hereditas* which the Americans were very foolish to accept, however gingerly at first, from 1954 on.

Every charge against French policy in Indo-China is a charge against its imitation by the Americans. And if General de Gaulle saw the light belatedly in Indo-China and in Algeria, the sensible American answer to the present problem is to imitate him, not rebuke him, however unpleasant the advice of a candid friend may be.

[1] British political sagacity in India was helped by British snobbery. The ruling class in the British Indian Empire, the "Indian Civil Service," was very small. There was no real equivalent to the numerous badly-paid white officials of Indo-China or the half-castes of Indonesia. So in India there were many competent native civil servants of the second class and some even of the first class. And the reforms of British government in India, pushed through between the wars over the opposition of Churchill, paid off after the second war as did the creation of an Indian officer class.

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BUT IT HAS PROVED easier to use General de Gaulle as a *diabolus ex machina* than to ponder the lesson of French failure. So General Maxwell Taylor, an exceptionally intelligent professional soldier, has recently warned his countrymen that if they get out of Viet Nam, they may get an American de Gaulle, since it was the French abandonment of their role in Indo-China that produced the movement that brought de Gaulle to power. This is to foreshorten history. It was the failure to liquidate the Algerian ulcer that brought on the crisis that provided an opportunity for General de Gaulle to take over France, as he had failed to do in 1946–7. The lesson is not as clear as General Taylor thinks. He has completely committed himself to an optimistic view, as soldier and diplomat, of America's chances in Viet Nam that seems less plausible every day.[2] But even without the catastrophe in Indo-China, the French Republic had already proved itself incapable of taking the necessary radical decisions. How radical, one can see by comparing the remote and artificial American links with Viet Nam with the very real economic, ethnic, military links between *"Algérie française"* and the *"métropole."* The abandonment of Algeria took far more political, not to speak of physical courage, than any conceivable American liquidation of its Asiatic adventure could possibly call for. But I fear that what most irritated patriotic Americans is not that General de Gaulle is wickedly wrong, but that he is insolently right.

And not only is he right, but the much despised French colonial empire had *some* virtues that America has not yet managed to import into Viet Nam. Far more Frenchmen have roots in Viet Nam than Americans can have. Viet Nam was to Catholic France what England was in the sixteenth century and Canada and Japan were in the seventeeth century, the sacred soil of Catholic martyrdom. (None of the commentators on the destruction—or liberation—of Hué seems to have noticed that, for different reasons, it is as sacred to millions of Catholic Frenchmen and Vietnamese as it is to Annamite traditionalists.) Alastair Buchan has told us, in this journal, how impatiently the American advisers and then the American army brushed away French suggestions that the big, set battlepiece was not what was wanted. (After all, Marshal de Lattre de Tassigny, who won a bigger set-piece battle than General Westmoreland has so far done, knew and said that these victories were barren.) This truth has had to be learned the hard way and "I told you so" grates on American ears. Alone, that message might account for American Gaullophobia.

But there is more to feed it. The thought that France, so recently bankrupt, could put pressure to bear on the dollar, much less put it in peril, is intolerable to many naive Americans and to many Americans who are not naive but resent the "Emperor has no clothes" proclamation from Paris. I do not share the General's mystical admiration for gold. And for sentimental reasons more than economic reasons since my economic reasons have no authority, I should deplore raising the price of gold to the advantage of the Soviet Union and South Africa. But the view that all that is involved is French wickedness, is no more deserving of respect than the Labour party's belief that it has again been the victim of a "banker's ramp." Alas, it is not only Mr. Micawber's countrymen who share his illusions! And I wonder what Robert Triffin of Yale, to name only one of the American critics of the present monetary system, must think of the simple devil's theory that makes indignant bartenders defend "our dollars" by pouring wine into the street.

But there are other charges brought against the General. He has driven NATO out of France, thus weakening its logistic set-up (and forcing its international staff into the suburbs of Brussels instead of the suburbs of Paris, a change that only the most patriotic or calculating Belgians think is for the better).[3]

The manner of the dismissal of NATO from French soil was ungracious. General de Gaulle lives up to Cardinal Newman's definition of a gentleman: he never gives pain accidentally. The long-overdue reconsideration of the role of NATO could have been forced on in another way. But General de Gaulle may have recalled

[2] It might be argued that it was the abandonment by France of her tutelary position in Indo-China that led, a few months later, to the rising in the Aurès and to the emergence of a much decorated N.C.O., Ben Bella, as the temporary George Washington of the Algerian revolution.

[3] It is perhaps characteristic of the present temper of the Americans that the news that the French government has paid for NATO property, without arguing, much more than the American negotiators expected to get was not widely reported. True, the French paid in dollars, not in gold, but the Americans could hardly object to that! This news got a "stick" in *The New York Times*. I saw no mention of it in any other news source.

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that his attempt to join the United States and Britain at the top of the NATO organisation in a new "troika" had been thwarted and, reversing the old American political maxim, decided that if you can't join them leave them with a bang.

A great deal of the Gaullist propaganda seems to me to be that and nothing more: azimuth or no azimuth, it strikes me as baloney, but of course I also feel that about British defence policy and even more strongly about the nostalgia of some Tory leaders for a return to the Persian Gulf. In the same way, I feel that the General's vision of a Europe "from the Channel to the Urals" reflects less a serious geopolitical position, than a memory of old school atlases such as he (and I) studied in our childhood with "Russia in Europe" divided from "Russia in Asia" by the Urals. This border lost meaning with the completion of the Trans-Siberian at the beginning of this century and every year that has passed has strengthened the Asiatic side of the Soviet Empire.

THERE ARE other examples of the General's bad manners which become bad judgment. It is by no means certain that his *"Vive le Québec libre!"* did any rational "Canadian" cause any good and nothing that the General did or Monsieur Levesque may do can alter the fact that Montreal is a French-speaking North American city like Cleveland and not a European French-speaking city like Marseilles.[4] Then, Americans are curiously reluctant to accept the possibly odious fact that General de Gaulle speaks for many Europeans who don't want to commit themselves on the principle *"toute vérité n'est pas bonne à dire"* —a maxim that has never appealed to the General.

And at the moment, the European prestige, the world prestige of the United States has never been more contested. Despite the hopes of the Princess of Monaco, there is no sign that sympathy for American policy and achievements in Viet Nam is growing. Mr. Peregrine Worsthorne has abandoned the waterlogged, if not sinking, ship and, possibly more serious, *The Wall Street Journal* has cast a cold eye on the American war in Viet Nam and seems to have come round to the traditional military and business view that you must never reinforce failure. To the editors of that admirable paper, "South Viet Nam" seems as unlikely to repay further investment as the New Haven Railroad.

One of the truths that General de Gaulle expresses and embodies is that it is no longer tolerable to leave "world leadership" to the Americans nor to welcome American aims, practices, ideals uncritically or even with a bias in their favour. It is this that inspires what are reported to be the General's mixed views about M. Servan-Schreiber's *Défi américain*. But the internal and external wars of the United States are steadily eating away the fairly general trust in the wisdom as well as power of the United States that, rightly or wrongly, John F. Kennedy inspired. Perhaps it would have all been the same had there been no crime in Dallas and had JFK been elected in 1964 instead of LBJ. We shall never know. But Hué and Newark are two strikes on the American claim to be natural leaders and many former admirers and more or less willing followers of American leadership have moved on to seeing them as the King of Brobdingnag regarded the humans whom Gulliver complacently described to him.[5]

America has no longer a seller's market and unconscious arrogance has now to be paid for. When one powerful senator refers to the General as a "senile" figure which the United States will not "allow" as a European leader, when another, addressing a sophisticated audience in London, always referred to the President of the French Republic as "Charlie," waiting for the laughs which did not come, one felt that the Senate needed education in manners.

There are, of course, special difficulties in Franco-American relations that do not arise between the United States and other "free" countries. There are no great French blocs of emigrants—or voters. So it is easy for French

[4] Few "Americans" seem to realise how much many unsentimental Canadians resent the degree of Yankee control of the Canadian economy which in practice means that important units of the Canadian economy carry out policies laid down in Detroit or Washington, policies which the Canadian people and the Canadian government would never think of adopting if they were really autonomous. Washington threatens Ottawa as much, at least, as does Paris.

[5] For example, the passionate *rifiuto* of the American way of life by Hans Magnus Enzensberger (*New York Review of Books*, 29 February 1968) is very Germanic, very excessive, at places merely plausible. But in other places it is more than plausible, and even when it *is* merely plausible, this hostile account by a privileged visitor is an important political symptom.

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popularity to slip low down in polls. True, there are millions of people of French blood in the United States but they are "Canadians," *Cajuns* with only remote and not necessarily cordial relations with their ancestral home. Huguenot blood is as highly prized in the United States as in Britain and in each country "an ounce of Huguenot blood is worth a thousand a year"—as is best exemplified by the immense fortunes of the descendants of Samuel Dupont de Nemours.[6]

But recent kinship ties with the French of France are rare. Despite the old legend of Lafayette, French and Americans have less in common than have English, Scotch, Irish, Germans, Italians, with the America where kinship ties are still so powerful. The French slip far down the popularity scale but then polls are taken roughly among representative groups—and the French group is small indeed. The Egyptians are even lower in popularity but does anyone believe that this would be so if there were as many Egyptians to poll as there are Jews? This truth should not be smothered by admiration for French cooking or *couture* or by the admirable pioneering work done in French cultural fields by the great American universities. Princeton and the Sorbonne have much in common. Newark and Nantes have not.

It will be wise, therefore, to dismiss sentiment, not to rely on memories of Lafayette—or Pershing. It may be true that the General still bears a grudge from the war years. If so, he was provoked—and provoking. But as one of his closest collaborators makes plain, the anger of de Gaulle which caused explosions against Britain and the United States was surpassed by his contempt for the Frenchmen who waited for Godot or God to deliver them. (See François Clouzet, *Vertu des temps difficiles.*)

THE SERIOUS ASPECT of the current febrile rage of so many Americans who have so much more serious things to worry about than the doings or misdoings of the President of the French Republic, is the light it casts on American arrogance—or barely hidden instability and self-doubt. The case has been well put by Stanley Hoffmann of Harvard, and Professor Hoffmann is one of the Americans who know France best—no light praise. He takes his countrymen to task for the barely concealed premises of the present wave of anger and of charges of near treason.

> De Gaulle has challenged many American positions and taken countless steps that we deplore. But his acts, which are based on a certain conception of French interests, imply no systematic and heinous attack on America's values and people as some here have suggested. Indeed, his own words and those of his government concerning the United States have never gone beyond a critique of American public policies. We have the right to disapprove his own and to reject his conception of world order. But the violence of our reactions is far more disturbing than the nature of his actions.

This is well said and well worth saying and it is an unusual pleasure for me to note that the public institutions that need this wise counsel least are the White House and the State Department.

[6] An example of this high estimate of the importance of Huguenot blood is provided by the fact that the good Scots names, Lamont and Pettigrew, are generally assumed to be Huguenot.

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Holmes Welch

The Chinese Art of Make-Believe

CHINA EXPERTS (or China specialists, as they wisely prefer to be called) have had a lot to explain in the past year. Why have Red Guards been shooting at one another in the streets of a dozen Chinese cities? Why did the staff of the Chinese embassy in London charge the courtly bobbies with axes and baseball bats? Peking has antagonised almost every friendly foreign government; the Chinese Communist Party has been deliberately wrecked by the man who created it; and education, on which China's economic future depends, has been replaced by study of the apothegms of Chairman Mao. Chairman Mao is treated like a god: indeed he commands greater public generation than any deity in China's religious past.

Political and economic factors are simply inadequate to explain all this, and explanation must be sought in psychological factors, in Chinese patterns of thought. But here the China specialist turns bashful. No large-scale study of Chinese psychology has ever been made; and in any case it is a tricky affair to generalise about the minds of hundreds of millions of individuals. Even more of a deterrent is the fear that this kind of generalisation may lead to the charge of racism. The China specialist is safe so long as he tells people that "the Chinese are just like the rest of us," but once he begins to discuss the ways in which their thought patterns are different—sometimes (in Western eyes) queerly or quaintly different—then he risks being called unsympathetic, ethnocentric, and even anti-Chinese. The fair-minded Western reaction is: "A fifth of the human race just cannot be that strange."

I am prepared to risk this reaction. I admire Chinese culture, history, and many of its people, but I know that large psychological differences do exist and that we cannot understand the situation in China unless we take them into account. I will not try to explain the situation: by the time this is printed, it may have altogether changed, but whatever it is or becomes, it will reflect characteristically Chinese ways of thinking. I want to discuss just two aspects.

A BRITISH FRIEND of mine once had the following experience. He was vice-consul in Foochow on China's southeast coast when, soon after the Pacific war began, the Japanese were rapidly advancing. One day the mayor called a meeting of all the important people in the area to "take stock of things." After they had assembled, he asked His Britannic Majesty's representative to speak first. My friend stood up and gave what he considered an appropriate address. It was true, he said, that Chinese forces had suffered serious reverses and that Foochow would soon be threatened. It was true that Japan had taken Hong Kong, Singapore, South-east Asia, and most of the South Pacific. The situation certainly looked dark. But now China had by her side the greatest world powers. American troops were beginning to counter-attack in the Solomons; and Britain was beginning to move ahead in North Africa. Vast forces were gathering, which, before long, would begin slowly to press the Japanese back to their inevitable defeat. When he concluded these inspiring remarks, there was dead silence. No one applauded. The mayor, ignoring him as if he had not spoken, rose to give his own view of the situation. The Japanese, he said, were everywhere on the run. Chinese armies were winning victory upon victory. The leading personalities of Foochow had met that day to consider how

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to take advantage of the exceedingly favourable situation. Everyone clapped enthusiastically.

Now it seems to me that this could not have taken place under similar circumstances in any Western country. It would have been regarded as an embarrassing absurdity. But obviously no one in that Chinese audience thought the mayor's remarks were absurd. He was, in fact, conforming to an ancient pattern of public "make-believe," which for centuries had given elasticity to Chinese foreign relations.

One could cite many examples. In theory, since it was the imperial centre of the world, sufficient unto itself, China did not need foreign goods and could not recognise any foreign sovereign. In fact, of course, trade was desirable. Therefore, in the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, imports from other countries were considered to be tribute and exports were "gifts to loyal vassals." In 1609 the Ryukyu Islands off the east coast had been conquered by the Japanese, who controlled them thereafter. Yet nominally they continued to be dependent on China; despite the presence of Japanese officials, each new ruler received a patent of investiture from the Chinese emperor. This made possible three-way trade between China, the Ryukyus, and Japan.

The same capacity for make-believe can be seen in the audience granted by the Chinese emperor to the ambassadors of England and France in 1873. The Europeans considered it a triumph that they had fought three wars to achieve. What they did not realise at the time was that they were led into the palace reserved for tributary missions, so that their countries' status as "loyal vassals" of China was preserved.

One might think this merely showed a concern for "face" and equate it with our own concern for prestige; but that would be missing an important distinction. Prestige is usually achieved in our society by the acquisition of something substantive—wealth or power. In China face can be achieved through words and gestures. These, of course, are things that the West has too, but in China they play a more decisive role. They are called "the rites," meaning the rites of social intercourse as well as of religion, and if there is any single element that has distinguished Chinese culture from its beginning, it is the efficacy of the "rites." The words and gestures accorded to power are valued as highly—or more highly—than power itself. Words *were* power. For instance, when a man died, his coffin used to be decorated with the word "*Longevity*." It was put there not to celebrate the ripe old age he had reached, for he may have died young, and not, as at a Western funeral, to emphasise the immortality of the soul. Its purpose was to assert the immortality of the body, to counteract the fact of death. Later, when a memorial tablet was placed in the family shrine and the name of the deceased was inscribed on it, this inscription became equivalent to the soul. Hence it was called a "soul tablet": the soul dwelled in its words. Westerners also reify: but in a much more limited way. That is why, when one begins the study of the Chinese language, one senses a difference between its ideograms and our phonetic writing. Each ideogram has a kind of life of its own, almost talismanic in its efficacy. China used to have charitable societies whose purpose was to patrol the streets and pick up paper with writing on it—any sort of writing —lest it should be dishonoured by trampling underfoot.

IN RECENT YEARS my own work has been the study of Chinese Buddhism. (Does this seem too far removed from the Red Guards?) About 1900, when a certain monastery near Nanking was visited by the eminent German scholar, Hackmann, he noted that its dietary rules were particularly severe. "The evening meal is forbidden in accordance with the ancient Indian regulations. They are only allowed tea to drink." But if Dr. Hackmann had looked into the tea bowls, he would have found that they contained soft rice, the usual evening meal in Chinese monasteries. In fact, it was rice; in words, it was "tea." It was "tea" whether you asked a monk or looked it up in the monastery rules. In this way the need for the strict observance of the rules was satisfied.

Then there was the custom that a Buddhist monk should only accept a disciple when he was at his own private temple. He was not supposed to do so in a large public monastery, which belonged to the whole clergy and from which novices were excluded. Often, however, this caused difficulties. His private temple might be miles away. In that case, in order to avoid the inconvenience of a long trip, the ceremony would *actually* take place in a public monastery, but *nominally* would be considered to take place at his private temple. If one later asked the disciple or if one looked at his ordination certificate, only the name of the private

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temple would be given. Yet in some cases he had never been there in his whole life. This was not considered to be a deception or a violation of the rules; it was "an expedient means." What had happened nominally (*ming-i-ti*) had greater validity than what had happened actually.

This same capacity for "make-believe" can be seen in Chinese opera, where the actor who carries a whip is considered to be on horseback. Naturally no one in the audience thinks there is really a horse on the stage, but they can make believe it is there, just as they can make believe that the stage hands, who often cross the proscenium during the opera to move props, are not there. Of course, Westerners too can suspend perception or perceive imaginatively: the Elizabethan stage made some of the same demands as Peking opera: but there is a difference in degree, exemplified in the contrast between the lion dance performed in an American Chinatown and the same dance performed on native Chinese soil. In Chinatown the illusion receives maximum ocular support. The legs of the performers are covered with furry trousers and their torsos are usually hidden by the body of the lion. In south China, on the other hand, the performers wear khaki slacks and dirty sneakers; and when they manipulate the lion's paper body, rather than keeping it low so that it will conceal their own torso, they raise it high into the air so that it may cavort as interestingly as possible, even though it means that their own heads are exposed much of the time. This does not in the least detract from the enjoyment of the watching crowd.

WESTERNERS OFTEN APPLY the term "make-believe" to what their children do—making believe that they are kings and queens or Batman and Robin. Therefore it has a slightly condescending connotation. There is nothing childish about Chinese belief in the power of words and names, which is highly sophisticated and serves important ends. When Red Guards rename a street the "*Street of Struggle against Revisionism*," they are winning a victory in that struggle. When a Chinese speaks of "Peiping" rather than "Peking," he is demonstrating that the Nationalists are still the government of China. Emperors—and ordinary individuals—have always changed their names when things were going badly: a new name helped them make believe that they were new people, with different luck. Confucius told his followers to sacrifice to the spirits "as if they were present": this "as-if" brought them to life. None of this can properly be called pretence, since pretence implies falsity and there is nothing false (from the Chinese point of view) in what they are doing. They are acting on the basis of a different attitude from ours towards appearance and reality.

APPEARANCE AND REALITY have provided as common a theme for Chinese as for Western philosophers. Is the dream real and life a dream?—is everything created by the mind?—these are two of the main questions of Taoism and Buddhism. But there is a much more practical, poignant aspect to the problem of appearance and reality in China. At a recent academic conference a Chinese scholar asked: "Why is it so common in my country that two individuals who have been the closest friends for years and years, working together, playing together, sharing the most intimate confidences, and constantly professing their friendship—why is it that between such people there is often an explosion after which they become irreconcilable enemies?" He said that he himself did not know the answer.

The answer may lie, I think, in the ease with which the Chinese fall into roles created by words—roles to which their own feelings do not really correspond, but which they find it easy to fill by make-believe—"as if" they were friends. During the period when such a friendship flowers, neither of the two admits his real feelings, and this explains the violence of the explosion when it comes.

We have been seeing an analogue of this in the dispute between China and the Soviet Union. Its violence has at least partly been due to the constant reiteration of the "close, unbreakable friendship" between the two nations in the years before it broke out. During the 1950s we should have been less ready to take such statements at face value. We should also, perhaps, be less ready to take at face value the recent "Cultural Revolution." When the Red Guards recited quotations from Mao, holding their little red books aloft, when they proclaimed their loyalty to him and denounced his enemies, they were using words to support a role they had assumed. Part of their vehemence may have been due to the fear that they were not playing it wholeheartedly enough; they were in danger of being isolated from their

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brother actors—and from the director. This fear helps to account for the outrages they committed against political scapegoats and against innocent elderly citizens; for the violence with which they clashed among themselves; for the behaviour of Chinese students abroad who created serious incidents in half a dozen countries by their insistence on public demonstrations of loyalty to Mao; and for the embassy personnel in London and Moscow, who faked injuries or injured themselves with as little regard for realism as Chinese stage-hands.

IF THIS IS TRUE, then what has appeared to be a wave of almost fanatical support for Mao Tse-tung among the students—or at any rate among those students who were not fanatical supporters of Liu Shao-ch'i—is highly ambivalent, highly unstable. It has served to release the frustrations and tensions of youth, particularly strong in a totalitarian society, but it can flip, like the bimetallic strip in a thermostat, when the tension between the overt role and the inner feeling becomes intolerable; or when the demand for role-playing is reduced.

But is there objective evidence that any such tension exists? How do we know about the inner feelings of the youth? We don't know, and apparently we aren't interested.[1]

It is true that at the one time (in 1956–57) when opposition to the régime could be expressed, students voiced a totally unexpected wave of hostility. But that was ten years ago. It is true that many refugees continue to show a deep resentment of the régime—but that can be explained away by their being refugees. One is struck, however, by the results of a small-scale psychological study of overseas Chinese recently made by Dr. Richard Solomon. It indicated that a prevailing attitude among them was distrust. This fits in with what I have observed when living in the Far East. It is not the hostile distrust that is common in our culture; rather it is a sense that things are not what they seem. Much more than in the West, famous books and paintings are not by the men whose names they bear; platforms, programmes, and even laws are mainly for decoration. "Behind the curtain" (*mu-hou*, a very common expression in Chinese) individuals and organisations are different—pursuing different aims, moved by different feelings—from what appears on the façades of their words and roles. One can sense this in another commonly used word—"complicated," *fu-tsa*—which has a sinister connotation absent in English. Westerners are less likely to assume that things are "complicated." That is why they are often told by Chinese: "You people are so naïve." That is, we do not automatically assume, as they do, that "behind the curtain" something else is going on.

WHEN I FIRST began interviewing Chinese monks, I made the mistake of explaining quite frankly that I was on the research staff at Harvard and planned to write a book.[2] Since this was what I *said* I was, I must (in their eyes) obviously be something quite different. At first they figured I was an American agent, using Buddhism as a cover; then they decided that I was a Christian spy, bent on collecting information that missionaries could use to convert their followers; finally (as my questions went on month after month) they concluded that I must be planning to start a monastery myself in the United States. Many of them could never be persuaded of the truth, since it had been presented to them at the beginning, openly.

Another thing that I became aware of in four years of interviewing was the Chinese sense of orthodoxy. It was hard to get people to talk about how things had actually been done. What they wanted to tell one was how things ought to be done or once were done according to an ancient text. I remember an old abbot who said that the monastery he lived in thirty years was on an island in the middle of the Yangtse River. I later learned that this was only its classical, orthodox location: during all the time he had been there it lay a quarter of a mile inland from the river, which had changed its course years earlier. Orthodoxy put even more of a screen over personal beliefs. Educated Chinese are not supposed to take seriously either gods or ghosts, or to have traffic with monks. But when I could persuade people to take off their orthodox *persona*, I often discovered an active religious life.

THIS brings me to another reason for the frenzy that has now been sweeping China. People are desperate to find out what orthodoxy now comprises. Early in 1967 Chiang Ch'ing,

[1] Only last year when a major American university applied for a grant to make the first large-scale study of Chinese psychology, it was turned down.

[2] It turned out to be two books—*The Practice of Chinese Buddhism 1900–1950* and *The Buddhist Revival in China* (Harvard University Press, 1968).

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the wife of Mao Tse-tung, addressed a meeting of cinema workers. They asked her how to tell who the "bad people" were, so that they could pick the right target for political struggle. Chiang Ch'ing replied:

> Motion picture circles are very complicated. Don't be too absolute about anything. Those who find out that they have been hoodwinked should tell the rest of you. Care must be taken to see whether they were manipulated by others from behind. . . . At present you are engaged in furious recriminations against one another. I cannot say which of you is correct and which is incorrect. But of one thing you must take care: don't fall into the enemy's trap. There are signs at present that some people are turning the spearhead of struggle against the masses themselves, and there are others who are playing various tricks and trying to set up a proletarian command headquarters. Be on the alert and don't fight blindly. The most dreadful thing is confused fighting among the masses, particularly within literary and art organisations. Now whenever you argue among yourselves, you do so in great anger. You are not so angry when you struggle against the power-holders who take the capitalist road, but you fly into a rage in dealing with yourselves. It is probable that there are people manipulating you from behind. Some of your acts, such as cutting telephone lines and following motorcars, are rather odd. Young people like you are unlikely to think of these things. You must be on the alert.[3]

This is fairly typical of the increasingly frequent warnings against "complications" during the past year. One of the reasons for the increasing frequency has been the gap between words and actuality—a gap as large as at the monastery where "tea" was actually rice. A Red Guard newspaper revealed last spring that the following were "out-and-out counter-revolutionary organisations": the National Headquarters of the Rebel Corps of the Eliminate-the-bourgeois-ideology Army, The National Red Rebel Corps of State Farms, and the National Rebel General Corps of Red Labourers. The first had stormed Communist Party headquarters. The second had "deceived and incited some people who did not know the difference" to attack the editorial office of the *People's Daily*. The third had assumed the name of the Communist Party's Central Committee to call political rallies in the great T'ien-an-men Square.[4]

For months now the air has been thick with accusations and counter-accusations of "ulterior motives," "dark schemes and shooting arrows from the dark," "manipulation of the masses." Like a rat in a maze, the average citizen feels an anxiety about "complications" that approaches neurosis and sometimes madness. Theodore White raised some eyebrows last year when he used the term "madness" in the title of a television programme on China; but it is used in the Chinese press itself. For example, after describing a nightmare of confused internecine struggle in Chungking, a Red Guard newspaper went on to say:

> Today scarcely a day passes without the revolutionary masses being arrested indiscriminately. Every day large groups of revolutionary masses are parading in the streets, being encircled and attacked and struggled against. Many revolutionary people have been forced to sever their father-son relationship or husband-wife relationship. Many revolutionary people and revolutionary young fighters, unable to stand the pressure, have gone mad.[5]

This kind of situation is not totally unfamiliar (if we remember the McCarthy era), but it is different enough for us not to judge it by our own premises. We must try to see it as the Chinese do themselves, in all its "complexity," with much at stake in what we would consider mere words and gestures. Yet, paradoxically, while there is much at stake, it is not necessarily internalised. The Chinese are peculiarly capable

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[3] See "Statements by Comrades Chiang Ch'ing and Ch'i Pen-yü at an Interview with Representatives of the Revolutionary Masses of the Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio and August 1 Film Studio" in *The Combat Bulletin of Maoism* (*Mao-tse-tung-chu-i chan-tou pao*) No. 2, 23 February 1967, translated in *Survey of the China Mainland Press* 3902:5-6.

[4] "It is Imperative to Ban and Suppress Counter-Revolutionary Organisations Resolutely" in *Physical Culture Fighting Front* (*T'i-yü chan-hsien*).

[5] See "Evil Mist Engulfs the Mountain City" in *Hung-yen chan-pao* No. 1, 15 April 1967, translated in SCMP 3941:11. Note the use of the word "masses" in the passages cited. As so often, it does not refer to a numerical majority of the population, but to an ideological *élite*. One of the many ways that Marxism has fitted the Chinese mind is in its claim that the Communist Party represents the will of the proletariat. Popular opposition is explained by saying that the people do not know their will as well as the Party does: they have been tricked by the reactionaries. Alternatively, they may be reclassified. In extreme situations (particularly in border areas) an increasing majority of the population may be classified as non-people until only the Party and its cadres are people—a fine exercise in make-believe.

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of being doctrinaire—of insisting on the importance and absolute validity of an ideological principle—but then privately ignoring it in practice. This does not mean they do not respect it. In order to maintain it publicly, they may be ready to sacrifice their lives, since the coherence of their society—and their own adherence to society—are symbolised by the words with which the principle is formulated. It does not matter if they all know that such words bear little relation to reality: sharing this knowledge only makes them more of an "in-group." It is the words that must be kept intact.

Thus the word *"commune"* continues to be applied seven years after the *commune* system has been dismantled. Just as the Cultural Revolution began coming to an abortive end, Mao announced that its "condition" was "not just good, but excellent."[6] Mao's words of wisdom are invoked by his opponents as earnestly as by his supporters. Some of Peking's bitterest wrangles with foreign governments have been precipitated by a specific verbal impasse—like the Indian border-dispute, which only came out into the open when the Chinese insisted that the Dalai Lama had been *"abducted,"* whereas the Indian government said that he had *"fled."*

Those who are unwilling to participate in Chinese make-believe cannot expect good relations with China. The reverse is also true. Today, if the United States seriously wished to normalise its China relations, it could go far by simply using the right words, the right spellings, the right gestures, without even making any concessions of substance. For example, Washington could begin to speak of Taiwan being governed from Peking, yet still continue its support and protection of the government in Taiwan, in whose vocabulary there is no such place as Peking. Washington could offer to comply with Peking's demand that all U.S. forces leave the Far East—but make compliance "eventual," so that not a ship or soldier need now be withdrawn. It could propose that Peking take China's seat in the Security Council. Why not? It would scarcely make the Council more ineffectual than it already is. Then one can think of a whole range of promising operative gestures. Professor John K. Fairbank suggested last year (in connection with Viet Nam) that the American President might undertake a dramatic peace mission to Geneva: he would announce that he planned to suspend all other business and wait there for Chou En-lai to join him for conciliatory talks. By the time he had cooled his heels for ten days, waiting in vain for Premier Chou, America would have lost enormous face (from the Chinese point of view) and the Chinese would feel relieved. No doubt such measures would sometimes be denounced as "imperialist tricks"; but sometimes, I think, they would be seized on as much-needed victories. In that case, they would offer the advantages of "appeasement" without the cost—not rewarding aggression, but joining the act. Surfeited with paper triumph, Peking might begin to relax a little. (Of course, I am not suggesting that the United States will actually do anything along these lines: its diplomacy is too conventional.)

Anyway, there probably can be no real relaxation in Peking until something of a pragmatic, revisionist government takes power. This in turn will depend on the failure of Mao's effort to create a new kind of human being—genuinely selfless and wholeheartedly dedicated to eternal struggle. Mao realises the difficulties. That is why he has talked as earnestly as Chiang Kai-shek of the need to "unite theory and practice." That is why ideology is given precedence over expertise in educating Chinese youth; and why so many adults have had to write their confessions again and again. The leadership hopes that with each confession, another layer of psychological resistance has been penetrated; but the fact may be that a new layer has been added. The Chinese have the world's longest tradition of temporising in order to cope with authoritarian government. Natural selection has taught them how to say and do what was expected of them with ever-increasing sincerity, but without abandoning their own core of aims and attitudes. This core is what is important for the future. Have they passed it on to their children? We do not really know.

Nor, I think, does Chairman Mao. Sometimes in the past two years, as he watched a march-past of two or three million teenagers chanting his name, he has looked a little wan, a little stony. Perhaps it was because he was thinking that he was the only man in China whose core had been touched by the essence of his little red book. And perhaps he was right.

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[6] *New York Times*, 1 November 1967. Doesn't this sound like the Mayor of Foochow during the Japanese advance?

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Michael Beloff

The Plateglass Universities

THE NEW UNIVERSITY explosion of the last decade has an element of illusion about it. The number of universities has doubled and now stands at over forty, but of these only seven, excluding the embryonic Stirling, are new institutions: Sussex (1961), York and East Anglia (1963), Essex and Lancaster (1964), Kent and Warwick (1965). No British University, medieval or modern, has survived unaltered from the current debate about the methods, structure, and purpose of tertiary education. The wind of change blows with increasing force through the groves of academe. The difference between the Plateglass Universities[1] and both their predecessors and upgraded successors was that in them alone was there the opportunity for pure experiment. It is they that bear uniquely the hallmark of this generation.

This freedom of their founders to fashion afresh a way of university life was protected in the curiously silent context of their birth. The change of mood *vis-à-vis* universities in the early 1960s from cautious consolidation to aggressive expansion was subterranean. It was inspired by statistical forecasts. The unprecedented number of Post-War babies were reaching maturity. More and more children were tending to stay on at school until their late 'teens. These twin phenomena—the "bulge" and the "trend"—exposed as inadequate the projected supply of university places. Sir Keith Murray, the head of the University Grants Committee, pressed the case for new foundations for the sake both of long-term growth and immediate innovation. The seven new universities were conceived during the years 1958–61 without the benefit of a single debate in Parliament. It was only after the vital decisions were taken that the public and political argument began about the role of the universities in the new scientific and social revolutions. The Robbins Report of 1963 did not, as is commonly believed, beget the Plateglass Universities: it merely gave them an Establishment benison. Expansion in fact preceded debate on its own value.

IF THE PLATEGLASS UNIVERSITIES were planned in quiet, the uproar that attended their launching more than compensated for it. Opinion-makers had now formulated the equation of educational expansion with national recovery. Dr. Albert Sloman delivered his Reith Lectures on the University of Essex before scarcely a stone had been laid, and a fat volume on Sussex appeared before her first set of graduates (though not honorands) received their degrees.[2] That these were declarations of intent and not descriptions of achievement was perhaps too easily forgotten. The main difficulty in writing with any kind of objectivity about the Plateglass Universities is that they acquired a myth before they acquired a substance.

They were after all built in an age when universities became such stuff as colour supplements are made of—once public, publicised. A

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[1] A suitable generic term is clearly required. The New Universities will not be new for ever. Such caps as "Greenfields," "Pinktile" and "Newbridge" hardly fit—where on earth are the bridges? I prefer "Plateglass" to Sir Edward Boyle's felicitous "Shakespeare." It is architecturally evocative: but more important, it is metaphorically accurate.

[2] Albert Sloman, *A University in the Making* (1964, BBC). David Daiches (ed.), *The Idea of a New University* (1964, Deutsch).

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neophilic press found in the Plateglass Universities a rich mine of stories: of professors whose unprecedented youth was pictured as a result of their unique talents rather than of the proliferation of chairs, of students who appeared equally adept at sex and sociology. A special vocabulary developed, a brand of academic Wilsonese. All disciplines "cross-fertilised and mutually fecundated." All courses "pushed forward the frontiers of learning," or alternatively "exploded at the flashpoints of knowledge."[3] The campus was the shrine of the cult of youth. The Jay twins became to the foundation of Sussex what Romulus and Remus were to the foundation of Rome, far outstripping in public reputation such Brighton dignitaries as Lord Fulton and Asa Briggs. The admass ballyhoo, not wholly disdained by the inmates—the Sussex press cuttings cabinet has a file exclusively devoted to the Jays—distorted both the praise and criticism of serious commentators.[4]

This emphasis on such peripheral campus phenomena as centres of contraceptive advice and multi-coloured gowns has obscured the primary function of the Plateglass Universities as institutions devoted to education. There is no doubt that their most original activity has been the shaping of what Asa Briggs called the "New Map of Learning." This, for their founding fathers, was the *quid pro quo* for the sacrifice of years of research. The Plateglass Universities had to serve no preliminary period of apprenticeship; they could grant their own degrees from the start. No vested interests, nor medieval philologists, nor Roman lawyers, stood in the way of thorough reform. In this sphere the New Universities were called in to redress the balance of the old.

THE VERY PHRASE had a Plateglass ring ring about it, suggesting that all previous cartographers, the Ptolemies of Oxbridge, Redbrick, Whitetile, and CAT, were academic flat-earthers. Essentially the new map involved the redrawing of the boundaries between old subjects. It did not take into account the whole planet of scholarship. It was a paradox that while contemporary talk was of the need for technologists and applied scientists, the New Universities devoted so much of their resources to the arts and social sciences. (Only one Vice-Chancellor, Lord James of York, has more than a nodding acquaintance with the second law of thermodynamics.) The student intake, however, proved to be of a far higher quality on the non-scientific side, an unpalatable fact reflected in the UGC's plans for the next quinquennium. In the event the Plateglass graduate is more likely to wear a white collar than a white coat.

On the one hand, the bias is towards the liberal rather than the vocational. There is no new map of forestry, dentistry, or medicine. (Cathedral cities are not famous for their hospitals.) On the other hand, traditional subjects are out of favour. There is no botany, zoology, or geography, little classics, less theology, and so far two modest law schools. Apart from new disciplines like "environmental science" and "operational research," the real thrust has come in politics, economics, and sociology. The social sciences command more allegiance than the humanities in an age when statistical truths are preferred to eternal verities.

Within the individual universities there is variety both in range and choice. Sussex already spans the full range of disciplines; Warwick has similar immediate ambitions. By contrast East Anglia and Essex have taken as their motto Dr. Sloman's dictum "The price of excellence is concentration." (It is of course also omission; there is no history or biology at Essex.) Regional influences affected syllabi. Climate dictated "Environmental Sciences" at Lancaster, history "Medieval Studies" at York, industry "Electronics" at Essex. The new map is drawn of different territories.

What is significant about the new map, however, is the treatment of the subjects rather than the nature of the subjects treated. The point of attack is the traditional single-subject honours course, which dates from the Victorian reforms of the mid-19th century. But if the Plateglass scheme simply involved the multiple study of subjects, it would be imitative, not innovating. The double-jointed Cambridge tripos, Greats and PPE at Oxford, the combined honours degrees at Redbrick: all are existing examples. At Plateglass the notion is not that two subjects should be studied at once but that they should be studied in relation.

[3] Cf. Sir Kenneth Wheare's *"The Universities in the News"* (1967 Rede Lecture).

[4] Readers will be familiar with the praise, mainly from within. For examples of apoplectic criticism, see *"R,"* ENCOUNTER, July 1966, and A. Flew, *Spectator* (4 Dec. 1964), the latter's status as a Keele professor adding a certain piquancy to his comments.

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A NEW ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE reflects the new academic creed. Faculties or departments based on a single discipline have been abolished. In their place is the School, which comprehends a complex of linked subjects. The approach varies from university to university. At Sussex the pattern is of "core" and "context." Five papers are taken in the "core" subject, four in the "contextuals." At East Anglia three or four subjects are grouped within a school, and while the student may specialise in a chosen subject, he is required to become acquainted with wider but related fields. At York there is a variety of combined subject degrees, and open courses that anyone is encouraged to attend. At Lancaster the scheme is of "major" and "minor" in adjacent disciplines with a "distant minor" in something wholly different. Essex, Warwick, and Kent achieve similar ends by wide-ranging preliminary courses over the first year. Moreover, on all the Plateglass campuses certain multifaceted subjects can be taken in a number of schools, each of which will provide a different flavour to the main course. Thus, at Sussex there are history courses in the Schools of African and Oriental Studies, of English and American studies, of European Studies, of Social Studies, and of Educational Studies. Similarly, at Warwick one can take Applied Mathematics in the Schools of Physics, Engineering Science, Molecular Sciences, or Economics. Interdisciplinary study is the watchword. It is appreciated that to harness a man and a horse to a chariot is not to have it drawn by a centaur.

Paperback Scolarship?

THE MOTIVE behind the new scheme was, predominantly an intellectual one. Creative scholarship was being generated in the interstices of traditional subjects, something reflected by the birth of hybrids like astrophysics or mathematical economics. The new history profited from statistical techniques. Classical political theory was criticised in terms of modern sociological evidence. Biologists used chemistry to plot the code of life: the origins of species were sought further back. The process was one of invention as well as discovery. Deliberate attempts were made to design courses that would promote new research interests as well as mirror them. Students of literature would, it was hoped, concentrate on an author's nexus with his social environment rather than on his virtuosity with the semi-colon. Lawyers would consider the purpose of law as well as its procedures, the implicit as well as the explicit reasoning of judgments. Academics, whose specialisms had different titles, discovered in the phrase of Mr. Frank Thistlewaite of East Anglia that "they spoke dialects of the same language."

A still broader educational impulse lay behind this rethinking. Over the last decades schoolchildren had started to specialise at an ever earlier age as their courses became arrows aimed at the target of university entrance. The Plateglass Universities by expanding the scope of their syllabi tried not only to correct the imbalance but to reverse the process. A flexible attitude was taken towards what kind of "*A*"-levels were needed to enter any particular school. Retraining schemes were constructed. Mathematics was taught to would-be economists at Warwick. At Essex a new language could be studied for one year as a prologue to one's degree course in Comparative Studies. At all universities the preliminary courses were designed to allow pupils the chance to revise their notions of what their ultimate specialism should be. Later statistics showed how necessary that opportunity was. Overall the highest premium was placed on adaptability. Plateglass graduates, according to Dr. Carter of Lancaster, should be ready "to change in a changing world."

Conservative sceptics have muttered of newfangled gimmicks, and have detected in such Plateglass options as "Comparative Studies" or "The Modern European Mind" the authentic aroma of paperback scholarship.[5] More significant is the evidence of the counter-revolution within. In part the problems that have confronted the new map's pioneers are technical. Textbooks adapted to the interdisciplinary approach are rare. There is no tradition of how to teach mixed-blood subjects. The younger teachers, their interests concentrated by their doctoral theses, are not so willing to discard part of their intellectual luggage, or to take up fresh burdens. A new race of pragmatists challenges the old bolsheviks. The students themselves (as David Riesman discovered at Sussex) are the true conservatives. They have all read their C. P. Snow and their Asa Briggs, but science was something many of them gave up

[5] Politics reading-lists at Sussex warn students of external examiners "not attuned to our ways of thinking" and give careful advice on how to dupe academic coelacanths while remaining true to their own behaviourist principles.

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gladly at fourteen, and how the hell *does* one relate literature to economics anyway? (One student complained to me "the only thing a degree from this university will enable me to do is to come back here and teach.") In those universities where there has been a formalised attempt to bridge the two cultures—at Sussex with its Arts-Science scheme, at Lancaster with its Distant Minor, and at Warwick with its Enquiry and Criticism course—revision is almost continual, and there is an ever increasing compromise with the arts-man's lack of numeracy. In this instance the very problem that prompted the experiment frustrates its success.

Moreover, there is no doubt that, on the wide view, depth has been sacrificed to breadth despite such devices to ensure rigour as undergraduate research-projects or special-subjects options. (It could after all, according to some Vice-Chancellors, no longer be taken for granted that their students, however able, would have come from a background of libraries, travel, and the other apparatus of general culture.) It is no coincidence that York, whose Vice-Chancellor Lord James is unequivocally identified with a policy of maintaining the severest standards, is the university least committed to the new thinking. Even at Sussex dons were forced to discard an original major in Politics and Sociology. When only five out of nine finals papers were devoted to the core subject, bisection of that core refined the specialism to nothing. It is becoming apparent that the students are aware of the possibility that they may become Bachelors of all arts, Masters of none. The ablest now tend automatically to stay on and take a one-year graduate-course, of which an interesting variety are offered by all the Plateglass Universities. There is a distinct movement towards the American position. What is *de jure* a three-year course is becoming a four-year one *de facto*.

THIS PRACTICAL PROBLEM is compounded by an intellectual one. In every syllabus the move towards integration is in conflict with the centrifugal tendencies of individual subjects. Knowledge flourishes within the subjects, not just between them. The PPE course at Oxford was conceived at a time when the three subjects were thought of as cousins—John Stuart Mill would have been the ideal undergraduate. Now, between linguistic philosophy, behavioural politics, and mathematical economics, the relationships are tenuous indeed. On all the Plateglass campuses there has been fission within the schools, as academic de Gaulles contend against the fashionable internationalism. At Sussex the School of Social Studies is in the throes of a battle over the "contextuals," which are no longer seen to be common to disciplines that range from law and religion to economics and social psychology. At Kent, in the same field, there are many who say that the purpose of their preliminary course should be to acquaint the student with the distinctive features of individual subjects rather than to seek out what residual qualities they have in common. In the School of English Studies at East Anglia some are finding that History and Literature are not a wholly harmonious blend. Kipling may be an author with something to tell both camps, but what of Joyce? Such revisionist philosophy is not confined to the arts nor to those places where syllabus changes have made a public exhibition of it.

THE MERITS of the Plateglass scheme will be tested ultimately in terms of social utility as well as of intellectual consistency. Will Plateglass graduates bring, through the influence of their university education, special knowledge and distinctive qualities of thought to the problems, political, scientific, moral, industrial of Britain in the last third of the twentieth century? Will they challenge the Establishment, overthrow the System? It is far too early to say whether the hopeful prophecies of Vice-Chancellors' inaugural addresses will be fulfilled. But if the new strategy is developed and improved so that university education, at any rate for the ablest students, becomes a two-tier process —three years interdisciplinary study, two years rigorous professional training along the lines of the great American graduate schools—the Plateglass Universities might produce valued generations of experts with purpose. In a complex world one should learn a lot about a little before one learns a little about a lot.

Universities, however, are concerned with men and materials as well as methods. Many feared that rapid expansion would involve a decline in the general level of undergraduate performance. Kingsley Amis jousted with Lord Robbins, the latter's statistics convincing only marginally fewer Oxbridge dons than the former's satire. Discussion of the relative intellectual distinction of the student bodies at

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different universities is inevitably futile, based as it is on the *obiter dicta* of migrant dons and external examiners, and the evidence of class lists whose ambiguity is heightened by the Plateglass methods of assessment.[6] Moreover, it diverts attention from the real problems posed by expansion. For it is scarcity that threatens standards. In this sense it is less that means worse.

Laudable as it may be to make universities accountable for what they spend, it is of little use if one gives them nothing to account for. All British universities have suffered during the recent economic squeeze; but, as Dr. Sloman rightly pointed out, the young sapling is more affected by the blizzard than the hardy oak. It is not merely that we spent a fraction of the sum in founding new universities that is spent in Germany, Canada, or Mexico, let alone the U.S.A. The building moratorium of 1965, the freeze of 1966, the cutbacks for the new quinquennium announced in 1967, the 1968 package have made the initial grants seem generous. Not enough money was promised. Now, as Lord James said in his recent report "Sums of money promised ... are not forthcoming."

The dangers of this parsimony derive from the fact that the philosophy of expansion is central to the Plateglass experiment. One of the most striking features of the Plateglass Universities has been their speed of growth. Sussex has already more than 3,000 students, overtaking Keele which was founded in 1948. The others are all past the 1,000 mark. If in the past it was felt that new universities were like new cars which had to be run in gently if they were not to be ruined, the contemporary view was that they were like jet airliners which have to take off quickly if they are to become airborne. But now the newest prospectuses are interleaved with announcements of projects postponed. Warwick curiously finds itself with a Law Professor without a department. Courses already mounted are inadequately underpinned. The laboratories planned for third-year biologists at Sussex remained unbuilt as the biologists entered their third year. And, having induced British scholars studying abroad and foreign academics to swell their faculty lists with promises of research equipment and materials, the Plateglass authorities have found themselves unable to fulfil their promises. The less the money, the lower the morale.

It is new University libraries that epitomise the first chapter of the Plateglass story. They are stylish buildings on the list for architectural prizes. They are endowed with micro-film readers, telex machines, catalogues *à la* Library of Congress, carrels, snack bars, and aluminium chairs. Yet each received only £175,000 sufficient to buy 75,000 volumes at the start; each aims for a mere quarter of a million books in a decade. (The Shackleton Report said that Oxford with an academic population of 10,000 was underserved though the Bodleian was a Copyright Library with more than a million books, and every college, and many of the faculties, had libraries of their own.[7]) The notorious double standard whereby the money available to buy books for a new university library may be under half that available to equip a laboratory for a single science subject has resulted in a situation where Lord Fulton could confess in his last Sussex report of 1967 the library's "increasing inability despite growth to meet increasing demands particularly by graduate students." Books by themselves do not make a great university: if they did, Texas would be the Athens of the modern world. It is hard though to see how a great university can be created without them. Wander around a Plateglass library and inspect the collection in a field in which you have specialist knowledge. There is nothing more revealing unless it is to talk to a visiting American graduate. A new map is no use if one's compass is defective.

Community Spirit

IT IS NOT ONLY the academic experiments on the new campus that are put in jeopardy by insufficient resources. The Plateglass vision was concerned not only with the content of university education, but with its context. There was a deliberate avoidance of the normal pattern of British university life, typical of the civic universities founded in the 19th and 20th centuries, with its tripartite framework, learning in one place (lecture theatres, libraries, labora-

[6] The Plateglass Universities have broken away from utter dependence on the final honours school, and all are experimenting with prepared papers or theses. East Anglia has adopted the transatlantic course-credit system. These reforms will not satisfy those who believe that the whole system of university exams is an illiberal plot. Classification must, however, be retained if only to distinguish the second class, who (the most recent thinkers inform us) are much abler than their unfortunate brethren who won firsts.

[7] See further the Parry Report (1967).

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tories), leisure in another (separate student union buildings), living in a third (lodgings scattered throughout the town). The New Universities aimed to break away from the anonymity of factory-style university life and looked back to the eccentric Oxbridge ways.

It was aspiration towards a community life as well as economic necessity that dictated the choice of site. New Universities flourish in ancient soil. Colchester was a leading town in Roman Britain. The castles or cathedrals of Norwich, York, Lancaster, Canterbury and Warwick remind one of their medieval origins. Only Brighton, which sprang into prominence as a Regency watering place, has any claims to modernity. None of the university cities has a population of over 170,000; Canterbury's is under 35,000. And all the universities themselves now wish for a high proportion of residence on campus, whether like Warwick or Essex they aim to be multiversities of 20,000 or more students, or like Kent and York to limit themselves to 6,000 in the foreseeable future. Thus all are sited on the edge rather than in the centre of their mother cities, and what is more are growing away from rather than towards them. As they supply more and more accommodation on campus, they will become little towns in themselves rather than parts of towns. The first four inhabitants of Norwich of whom I asked the whereabouts of the university were unaware of its existence.

On campus there has been the closest liaison between Vice-Chancellor and architect. All the Plateglass Universities have something of architectural interest and elegance to offer, be it Holford's cruciforms at Kent, Lasdun's pyramids at East Anglia, or Capon's domino towers at Essex, and exhibit the same objective of concentrated high density living. Even at Sussex or Warwick whose belt of buildings is furthest flung, it takes no more than quarter of an hour to walk from one end of the site to the other; at Essex and East Anglia with their linked walkways it will take some five minutes. Lecture theatres secrete coffee bars; classrooms are dotted about the colleges. The interrelation between the layout of buildings and the quality of social life is carefully considered.

THE FUNDAMENTAL NOTION OF COMMUNITY is reflected not only in the architecture but in the attitude of the authorities. The preferred concept was one of a society of equals, even if students were to be somewhat more equal than staff. The junior members were given an unprecedented share in running the university, and involved from their arrival (though not, as some later complained, before it) in the planning process. Their representatives sat on a range of committees, discussing amenities, residence, food, libraries, and even syllabi. The disciplinary process was infused with natural justice; right to prior information of a charge, to a hearing, to defence counsel (one's tutor), to appeal. On some campuses, Sussex, Essex and Lancaster, there are student judges for summary offences. Rules, moreover, are at a minimum. The Plateglass Universities anticipated the Latey Report (*The Age of Majority*, Cmnd. 3342). Though on all campuses students are assigned moral tutors or advisers, only at Kent with its strong vein of Oxbridge ideals is there really any allegiance to the view that the universities' authorities are *in loco parentis*. Sexual frolics are controlled only by curfew rules, which are usually justified on the grounds of protection of privacy, not chastity. Such rules would anyhow be difficult to enforce since (except at Sussex) men and women —the latter average two-fifths of the student population—live on adjacent corridors or staircases. Participation, reflected also in the universal revival of small group teaching, has replaced paternalism.

At the moment the reality falls far short of the ideal. Money for campus residence comes from appeal funds, not the coffers of government. Only Warwick with its proximity to the centres of Midland wealth has had a notably successful appeal. Small cities lack rich citizens. On the newest campuses, like Kent, the proportion in residence in 1967–68 has actually fallen. The commuter student is no stranger to the Plateglass campus. Some at Lancaster commute from Morecambe, a train and bus journey of three-quarters-of-an-hour. Some at Essex live at Clacton, over ten miles from Colchester; some at Kent have to come in from Margate to Canterbury; Leamington and Warwick are seven miles from the new Midlands university. Digs have not been very easy to come by in the adjacent communities, and the fact that the freeze has forced some locals to make a virtue of necessity has not diminished the tensions caused by the arrival of an immigrant community. Seaside landladies, in addition, are only too eager to expel students at the end of the summer term to make way for the more prosperous holiday makers.

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On campus itself the external elegance of the architecture belies the internal style. The mania for open-plan design has fathered a series of brightly coloured mausolea with cavernous roofs, angular furniture, wind-tunnel corridors, linoleum on the floor, perforated hardboard or garish abstracts on the walls, lamps that swing low like jungle creepers, and the dry atmosphere that is the tell-tale sign of defective central-heating arrangements. On every single campus the main Junior Common Room has been likened to an "airport lounge." (It is reported that George Steiner, the Cambridge critic, commented on one: "At least in an airport lounge I wait for a plane to fly away in....") Private rooms are small, often poorly insulated. Since the campuses, save at York where building is carried on at the extremities and East Anglia where the first generation lived in a prefabricated village, are alive with the *musique concrète* of construction (not to speak of the all-pervasive transistor), an academic atmosphere is cultivated with some difficulty. The discomforts of Redbrick communal life find their parallel on Plateglass campuses not because the universities are huge mass-production degree-factories but because the scarcity of resources has made even these embryo institutions burst at the seams.

Such flaws in the fabric of the community ideal may be repaired with time. More important is the reluctance of the modern student to live in a recognisably university-controlled institution. The Plateglass universities offered distinct variations on the basic theme of campus residence. Kent has a traditionally collegiate system in all except the academic sense. York too has borrowed the virtues of the Oxford example. At the other end of the scale, the Essex towers are skyscraper blocks of autonomous student flats, where even the Vice-Chancellor's writ does not run. And Lancaster which initially proclaimed adherence to the collegiate idea has now borrowed money from an insurance company to pioneer an economical plan for student flats within this framework. Sussex has schemes for a Student Village on campus, and even at Kent there are mutterings about student Co-operative Housing. For students are prepared to live on campus for the sake of convenience, not of ideology. They resent both the rituals and the regulations that go with life modelled on an old-fashioned college or hall-of-residence basis. The National Union of Students has pointed out the expensiveness of such halls, and on all the Plateglass campuses a main focus for student protest has been any rule which restricts the students from living in flats—even though, as the Sussex report for 1967 points out, "because of the great student demand for flats, prices for these rise alarmingly." Independence of the university connection, rather than integration within its community, might be seen as a major aim of the new student.

The Power Game

Any visitor to the Plateglass campuses is struck by the fact that the New Universities are both 9–5 and Monday-to Friday institutions. Although university terms are only ten weeks long, the authorities have steadily given ground on *exeat* restrictions. The historic charms of the mother cities, and the natural beauty of the surroundings, cannot compensate in student eyes for the lack of the apparatus of modern youth culture. What is missed—in addition to museums, galleries, libraries and orchestras—are boutiques, coffee bars, cinemas, pubs, restaurants. Five of the New Universities are within two-hour train journeys to London, which beckons like Mecca at the weekends.

That this is a major problem is well recognised. In the Lancaster student handbook for 1966–67 Dr. Carter warned new arrivals to expect "No tinned or quick frozen entertainment. You will be thrown back on yourselves." But extra-curricular student activity, especially in the evenings, is not all that favoured on the new campuses. The number of clubs listed in the student handbooks is deceptive. The coterie of activists is talented but exclusive. Student politics attracts an ever-decreasing interest; the percentage that by constitution creates a quorum for council meetings is usually lowered annually. Debating and political societies flourish only spasmodically, and political excitement is generated only at the extremes of the ideological spectrum. "Apathy" is the word that student editors most frequently use to describe the campus spirit. The most popular society of all is the Film Society.

Above all the "Student Revolution" with its claims for total equality is basically hostile to the notion of the academic community, which depends upon a certain hierarchy to reflect the fact that in the pursuit of learning, the central

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function of a university, some are teachers and some are taught. Although Plateglass constitutions and conventions give a far greater role to the student body in management of university business than is given to Oxbridge students (who have no say, and, *en masse*, do not demand it in such matters), or even Redbrick students (whose representatives negotiate like Trade Union chieftains with the bosses), there is no sign that overall student ferment is any the less. The Plateglass dons gave students "rights" with all the enthusiasm of Victorian politicians enfranchising the masses. And, like them, they have been paying a price ever since.

In one sense "student power" is about student autonomy. Despite the avowed and general intent of the Plateglass authorities to heal the "Us—Them" division, there are strong student separatist movements on many of the new campuses with demands for Union buildings, despite the lack of provision for this in the architect's long-term plans. Strikingly, there was one such even at Essex where democracy has permeated so far that it is the dons who are desperate for a common room of their own. The National Union of Students (a body of George Woodcocks) and the newborn Radical Students Alliance (a claque of Jack Dashes) both encourage students to see themselves as a distinct class interest necessarily at odds with the dons in their aims. It is a unique phenomenon of the Plateglass campus that some students complain that their elected representatives are actually emasculated by sitting on committees with the academic authorities rather as Ramsay MacDonald's first Labour Government was accused of being seduced by the Establishment, or Negro Congressmen are called "Uncle Toms."

The specific objectives of the student rebels, to judge from the Plateglass experience, appear to be threefold. Political—a sabbatical year for the President of the Student Council, right to representation on Senate, improvement of the disciplinary process; libertarian—abolition of moral rules be they aimed at smoking (Sussex), spirits (Kent), or sex, and lifting of restrictions on flats or *exeats*; and material—more facilities, especially for leisure.

Despite the existence of regular channels of communication, and the accessibility of the dons, direct action, as opposed to the opprobrious "*Tio Pepe* diplomacy," is often employed. At East Anglia a march with banners greeted the expulsion of a student in 1965, sanctified in the folklore of student protest as "The Taff Parcell incident." When student cars were banned from the Bailrigg campus at Lancaster in 1967, students repeatedly broke the boom with the enthusiasm of sailors of *The Mountjoy* relieving Londonderry. Food boycotts are a favourite pastime at Warwick. A powerful minority, responsible for the image of campus *mores* to the outside world, foster distrust of the authorities, whose refusal to accede to any student demand, however extreme or uneconomical, is greeted by some campus columnist as "tyrannical," "reactionary," or "farcical," with the predictability of the *Peking Daily* heaping the epithets of "fascist" or "imperialist" on the American Government. Above all, the academics' concern with the "Good Name of the University" is treated with the same scorn as the politicians' evocation of "the national interest." One Vice-Chancellor, vexed by the insistent clamour, summed up an individual situation for me thus: "Juke-box in, ——— out!" I leave the readers to guess which he was.

There has, of course, been a certain backlash from the Liberal Establishment. Mr. Thistlethwaite in his report for 1965–66 spoke of "the otiose and rather foolish methods . . . of presenting general petitions." Lord James said caustically in his for 1966–67: "All over the world students have become much more conscious of what they sometimes feel are their rights." Dr. Templeman of Kent, a more Conservative figure, commented in his for 1966–67: "As for students themselves I would only hope that they do not miss their real opportunities by spending too much time and effort in insisting upon their alleged rights. I think there is a real danger of this happening at the moment and some of their seniors in universities seem to me to be notably misguided in the encouragement they give to this sort of attitude." It would be wrong to paint the modern campus as some sort of battleground. The great majority of students take no part in any open quarrels. The rebels, however, appear to represent a developing trend, rather than a spasmodic phenomenon, as the recent battles at the University of Aston and the London Polytechnic demonstrate.

FOR WHAT IS NEW in the English university, and fully illustrated by events on the new campuses, is the growth of a student movement, a pressure group devoted to its own rights like any other.

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The national incidents of 1967, the LSE sit-in over the appointment of Dr. Walter Adams as Director, the day of protest against the Labour Government's decision to raise fees for Overseas students, the formation of a Radical Students Alliance, all were misinterpreted by a Press apt to equate student protest with the General Strike, Spain, or CND. In fact, students today reflect the general apathy towards politics. The new movement is self-conscious, not socially-conscious. By some sleight of mind students have managed, although they are a future *élite* to an increasing extent in a degree-conscious society, to identify themselves with the under-privileged. (The process has gone furthest in America where the Poor, the Negroes, and the Students are a favourite journalistic Trinity.) Yet, however genuine their grievances may be —and the shortage of money for education means that many are genuine—it is hard to see how they are actually exploited by the dons. A Marxist theory of "surplus value" as applied to the campus awaits its expositor! Student problems will not be solved by student power.

The Plateglass campuses have provided a particularly fertile soil for student ferment. The students were not inhibited like their Oxbridge counterparts by mediaeval legacy of paternalist tradition. (The Franks Report made no mention of student rights at all.) New universities, it was felt, should generate a more egalitarian academic community. It is significant that Essex, whose radical ideals had been publicly expounded in the Reith lectures, has attracted a noticeably more left-wing body of students than any of the others. It was at Essex that Anthony Crosland was greeted in 1967 with a banner calling him a Fascist, and that the student union disaffiliated itself from the N.U.S. in the same year—rather as if Malta left the United Nations. "The country needs our brains," I remember one demagogue saying at the critical meeting. "If we strike [*sic*], they will have to listen to us."

But the real cause of the new attitudes is more general. The modern student shows a growing reluctance to segregate himself from the rest of the community. He dresses in the same way as his non-student contemporary, is influenced by the same admass transistorised culture, and has an automatic suspicion of anything that smacks of authority or received truth. Rapid expansion has peopled the Universities with a growing number of first-generation students, a quarter of whom come from a working-class background, to whom a pattern of life that echoes a centuries-old tradition is entirely alien. If students ever came up to university activated solely by the disinterested desire for learning, they no longer do today, It is increasingly evident that more and more come simply because of the monetary value that a degree confers. University life is no longer a quiet haven for three years' speculation: it is a prologue to a career. Nothing illustrates this better than the fact that just as social-service selectivists are starting to talk about student loans, the National Union of Students is beginning to consider wages for students. In an age of expansion, justified by considerations of equity and economics, the conclusion must be that the universities will have to adapt to the students, as well as the students to the universities.

Newman or New Men?

THE RESPONSIBILITY for clouding the vision of a community is as much that of the new academic as the new student. The imported doctrine of "publish or perish"; the game of what Professor Donald Davie of Essex has called "playing the foundations"; the milking of research money; the hunt for an invitation to that American conference; the opportunities to play the industrial consultant, the television pundit, the editor of one of those innumerable series—all these force the young academic to look outwards beyond the so-called society of the university and act with the same ambition as any other young person, worried about the mortgage, the car, and the baby-sitter. Today's wandering scholars change universities not to seek out new ideas, but to jump rungs in the salary ladder. One of the most obvious dangers confronting the liveliness of the Plateglass Universities is that the ideological impetus of the founding fathers will be balanced by the neutral conservatism of the new intake of staff, to whom the university is not so much the organised expression of an intellectual vision as a place that offers a better job. The old introverted idea of the university is dying, and a new one is being born. The Plateglass Universities are both grave and cradle.

The tension for Plateglass between the pulls of a historic past and a beckoning future can be illustrated in a number of ways. They are new universities in Cathedral cities. They have stylish old houses and halls as administrative

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centres—Stanmer at Sussex, Heslington at York, Earlham at East Anglia, Wivenhoe at Essex, Bailrigg at Lancaster—which stand out against the background of the modern campus architecture. They use gowns for their ceremonies, but have them designed by Cecil Beaton (the blue cape and tricorn hat of East Anglia) or Hardy Amies (Sussex and Essex), a peculiar mixture of high culture and haute couture. They persist in bestowing honorary degrees which merit Portia's description of the quality of mercy

... It is twice blessed
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes

but bestow them on the fashionable new élite, economists, sociologists, exporters. They install Chancellors with gaudy ritual and absent students. It all strikes a faintly comic note. I jotted down my impressions of Lancaster perched on the blue leather throne that had served for Princess Alexandra's inauguration, and which crowds (between royal visits) the office of the Registrar's secretary.

But this is mere embroidery. The Plateglass Universities are cut in more practical workaday cloth. Their greatest strength lies in their persistent curiosity about their own methods and solutions. The Department of Higher Education at Lancaster, the Institutes at Essex and Sussex are attempting to quantify information in fields of teaching methods and student attitudes never previously explored with such thoroughness. Lord Fulton, Lord James, and Mr. Frank Thistlethwaite have publicly and critically chronicled the history of the creation of their own universities. Professor Moodie at York is leading unprecedented research into the nature of university government. Oxford's tool of introspection was the amateur don-staffed Franks Committee. Sussex in a similar situation in 1967 employed a team of management consultants. On campus as in industry the drive is for maximum productivity.

"Lean, hard and efficient" was the praise Dr. Carter bestowed on the University of Lancaster in his most recent annual report. It is a far cry from the language of John Henry Newman, but it accurately reflects a modern Vice-Chancellor's response to the changing public expectation about the role of a university.

The danger remains that the Plateglass Universities which started as luxuries that the country could afford will become necessities which it cannot.

Rotten Clam

Over the naked poll
Of this dead mollusc stuck
Half-buried in the sand,
Its licking tongue a-loll,
Brine, gravel and sea-muck
Flow grating to and fro,
Flow without south or sound
As dreams to silence flow,
Slow-sluicingly.

Flickered through that dumb flux
The tongue's thin gabble glows
Red from the gravelly frot;
And when sad evening sucks
The sea down to expose
Wan flats where sadness broods,
From entrails on the rot
The putrid breath protrudes,
Flickeringly.

Hagiwara Sakutarō
Translated by Graeme Wilson

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Colin Clark

An Unorthodox Proposal

University Education in the Welfare State

THE PHRASE "Welfare State," now so universally used, did not make any appearance which can be traced in print (according to Professor Asa Briggs) earlier than 1947. It was not until a few years ago that this highly emotive phrase was first given a clear definition by Mr. Walter Hagenbuch, the Cambridge economist, who defined it as "a society in which every citizen is provided by the State with services that ensure economic security for himself and his family." A rapidly increasing number of families now regard a university education for their sons and daughters as a necessary contribution to their economic security, and expect to receive this also from the Welfare State.

Expenditure on the Welfare State is now increasing much faster than the national product. It is a mistake, however, to assume that this has always been the case. Welfare expenditure, as a proportion of the national product, had reached a high level in 1949. But in the closing years of the Attlee Government the proportion was rapidly decreasing, though defence expenditure was then rapidly increasing. Under the Churchill and Eden Governments the rate of increase of welfare expenditure was substantially less than the rate of increase of national product, while the proportion of national product taken for defence expenditure declined more rapidly still. This made possible substantial reductions of taxation in the early 1950s.

The reversal of this downward trend, when welfare expenditure again began to climb at a rate substantially in excess of the rate of growth of national product, which has continued to this day, came under the Macmillan Government in 1957. It may indeed be remembered that two of his Ministers, Mr. Peter Thorneycroft and Mr. Enoch Powell, at the time resigned in protest—though they were soon willing to come back into his Government again.

It is not that the country is showing signs of impoverishment. In fact, the rate of growth of productivity showed a moderate but definite acceleration in the late 1950s, and is now almost high enough to justify Lord Butler's famous claim, made in 1954, that it would be possible to double average real earnings in the course of 25 years.

While this fact is clear, the *causes* of the improvement are still very much under discussion. A favourite view is that much of it may be due to the increased competitiveness of British industrial life since the passing of the first Restrictive Practices Act in 1956. It is also a tenable view that we are now reaping the economic first-fruits from the greatly increased expenditure on education which began in the 1940s.

However, the rate of increase of national product, albeit somewhat improved, remains far short of the rate of increase of welfare expenditure. In time this must inevitably lead to considerable strains, demands for increased taxation, pressure on the balance of payments. It was Mr. Selwyn Lloyd in 1961 who began the futile procedure of telling the national product that it must increase faster, at the behest of the National Economic Development Council and in accordance with "The Plan," in order to meet the Government's expenditure requirements. Mr. George Brown repeated the performance, on a more grandiloquent scale, though he did point out that even his "planned" rate of growth of national product would not keep pace with the rate of growth of government expenditure. Both Mr. Selwyn Lloyd and

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Mr. George Brown were aided and abetted by a large number of economists who should have known better.

BUT WHY SHOULD NOT the provision of welfare services increase at a greater rate than the other elements in the national product? Surely they are all for very desirable objects, while the objects of private expenditure are often questionable? Can we not envisage a time when the greater part of the national product consists of publicly provided welfare services?

There is one fatal objection to this line of reasoning. However valuable the welfare services appear to us, they are of little or no interest to our foreign customers. They will not help to pay for our imports, on which we have to spend nearly a quarter of our gross national product, and we show no signs of learning to do without imports. Excessive expenditure on other objects also makes it difficult to find sufficient capital to pay for new industrial investment, without which we shall not be able to maintain our rate of increase of productivity, or secure additional exports.

But there is an even more fundamental objection, skilfully brought out by Sir John Hicks in his very interesting recent booklet *After the Boom*. The greater part of public revenue now has to be obtained from *the taxation of low-income families*. And there is a limit beyond which wage earners cannot be taxed, either directly or indirectly. The wage earner looks at his pay after income tax and National Insurance deductions, and knows well the price of his customary drinks and tobacco. His wife soon tells him, very plainly, how little the rest of his wage will buy after indirect taxes and other factors raising the prices of commodities and services have played their part. If the Government attempts to squeeze him beyond the economic limit, he will demand more wages; and if all wage-earners are of like mind, they will succeed in getting them. So the wage-price spiral is given another turn; and the balance of payments problem is again accentuated.

And don't say "This would not happen in a planned economy." One of the most runaway wage and cost inflations of all time occurred in Stalin's Russia, as soon as he started his "First Five Year Plan," which meant, amongst other things, imposing exceptionally heavy taxes on the necessities of life in order to pay for all his steelworks.

THE SILLY IDEA that all these problems can be solved by prattling about planning was indeed given its final quietus by the Prime Minister in his fateful Parliamentary statement of 20 July 1966. With this illusion gone, it has subsequently become all too painfully clear to the Government that their plans for expanding public expenditure, to which they felt themselves already committed, were rising at a rate far in excess of any possible rate of growth of the national product. Under such conditions the old difficulties would soon recur. Taxation, either direct or indirect, would have to increase to such an extent that the wage earner would have to accept a rate of improvement in the amount of income which he really had to spend on goods and services of his own choice much lower than that to which he had become accustomed under the Conservative Government. It was very clear to Mr. Wilson and his colleagues that this state of affairs was politically quite unacceptable, apart altogether from the fact that it would provoke a further irresistible torrent of demands for wage increases.

So now once again we are at the parting of the ways. The rate of expansion of welfare expenditure simply cannot go on at the rate which both Conservative and Labour Governments have envisaged. Which services are for the chopper?

This brings us to the question of the universities. Other services no doubt are due to be cut too. But it is very likely indeed that the Government will decide that it cannot allow public expenditure on university education to go on expanding at the headlong rate of recent years, and indeed that it may have to be contracted.

AT PRESENT we are expecting public funds to provide not only for the teachers in the universities, with all their laboratories, libraries, etc., but also for the majority of the taught (the latter charge falling mainly upon Local Authority funds). The only students not so provided for are the foreign students (many of whom however are paid for by their own governments), and students from this country whose parents' income exceeds a certain limit. It is indeed hard to understand the complete irrationality of prevailing ideas, that any parent who pays fees for the education of his children below the age of 18 is guilty of an "anti-social," "socially divisive" act; whereas the same parent is told that it is obligatory for him to pay the whole or a large part of the fees and expenses of a son or

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daughter who wins a university place. This political irrationality is accompanied by an equal degree of economic irrationality on the part of the Ministry of Education in their system for assessing parental contributions to University fees and expenses, which constitute, in effect, an addition to already high income tax rates and have led, in some cases, to families being made actually better off by reducing their income. A Means Test for all those who seek support from public funds is an entirely justified principle; but it must not be operated in such a way as actually to discourage earning, and certainly cannot be operated on top of already high income-tax rates. Mr. Patrick Gordon Walker showed himself aware of this when he recently gave his reasons for not applying a "means test" to the enlarged children's allowances. Even at the level of quite moderately-paid wage-earners, the amount which income tax takes out of each additional pound earned is now substantial, and many of them in addition are already subject to means tests in respect of Council house rents, children's education, etc. An additional means test imposed by the Government at this stage might leave them with little incentive to earn more.

IF PUBLIC OPINION were consulted it would not, I think, show itself very favourable to spending public money on university education. Here, people would say, we have the young men who are heading for successful and well-paid careers, who are going to charge us high fees when we want professional services—why should we have to pay for them twice over? The public, if all the information were fairly put before it, might seize on the obvious fact, which nearly all university men tend to ignore, that the provision of public funds for the universities represents predominantly *a transfer from low-income families (who now pay most of our taxation) to higher-income families.* A recent sociological survey conducted by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors showed that (with the exception of the University of Wales) only a minority, in many cases a small minority, of university entrants were sons and daughters of manual-working families—in spite of popular impressions to the contrary. There is here really quite a serious issue in social justice: whether it is right to impose more taxes, most of which will fall on wage-earning families, in order to confer benefits upon a limited number of young men and women, nearly all of them from higher-income families.

But is it not generally recognised that education, or at any rate the greater part of it, should be publicly provided, and that it is not permissible to leave parents to decide how much education they are willing to give their children, and to find its cost themselves? Some people are still using the good old 19th-century argument: that parents are too ignorant to understand the benefits of education, and that the state knows better than the parents what is good for the children. It may be true that there are some cases of parents themselves, quite uneducated, who actively discourage their children from seeking education. But this is certainly not the case with the majority of families who now seek university education for their children, or who are likely to do so in future, who have a very clear idea of its advantages.

The economic case for spending public money on education, beyond the amount which parents would have been willing to spend themselves, (I think that all economists will agree on this) arises out of the existence of "externalities." "Economic externalities," which serve to justify public expenditure, or intervention in the workings of the free market in other respects besides education, arise when a transaction between two parties—in this case a school and a family whose children are receiving education—is such that it is likely to confer indirect benefits upon a great many other parties, who cannot be identified, let alone charged fees, by the school providing the education. To be more precise, the raising of the general standards of technical skill, of managerial efficiency, of hygiene, and so on, which are the consequence of improved education, improves the productivity and welfare of the community as a whole to an extent greater than the amount actually spent on education, so that public expenditure on education becomes a socially remunerative investment. This is generally agreed by economists, though there is no general agreement on the extent of these "economic externalities," nor on the limit of the amount of public expenditure which they can justify.

IN GENERAL TERMS, this gives us a justification for spending public money on education, to an extent beyond that which parents, however well informed, would be willing to pay themselves. But *not* a blanket justification for indiscriminate expenditure. It seems fairly clear that

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general public benefits accrue from the training of additional numbers of scientists, technicians, managers, administrators, doctors, nurses, and teachers. It is considerably more difficult to make a case on the grounds of general social welfare for many of the arts degrees for which university students are now working, except in the case of a comparatively small number of highly qualified men. In the case of women students it is more difficult again to make a case on the grounds of the general welfare for imparting to them difficult and expensive professional and technical training, which it is clear that the majority of them will not be able to make use of, at any rate for most of their lives, in the fields in which they have been trained. There is, however, a strong case, on social grounds, for imparting to women a good general education and culture which they can pass on to their children.

It is necessary for the case for the general social welfare to be stated in this manner, because most socialists in fact neglect it, if indeed they do not actively oppose it. George Bernard Shaw once said that he, like most socialists, was an extreme individualist. This certainly seems to be the case when it comes to education, when their talk is all of individual rights, without any concern for the rights of the community. The criterion for expenditure on education, as for other public expenditures, must be the general social welfare. This is a very different matter from the attitude, now prevalent among many students, of thinking that they have a *right* to claim on taxpayers (mostly considerably poorer than themselves) to provide for them to go to the university, to study whatever subject they choose, for as many undergraduate and post-graduate courses as they choose; that it is an unpardonable breach of human rights for anyone to interfere with them; indeed that they are rendering the state a service by accepting the money.

Another way of stating our proposition is to say that of the economic benefits conferred by education, some accrue directly to the educated man himself, who on the average receives a substantially higher income (for a given amount of effort) than the uneducated man; the remainder appearing in invisible form, in a general raising of the community's standards of productivity and welfare. There is no general rule for deciding how much of the benefit is likely to appear in one form and how much in the other, and probably the proportions vary considerably in different times and places. Where a professional skill is scarce (for example, medical men in the United States) and the practitioners are well organised, the greater part of the economic benefits of their education is likely to accrue to their own incomes. The same was probably true of most professional men in 19th-century England, when educational facilities were not abundant, and a considerable degree of artificial scarcity was also created by the appointment of large numbers of educated men to the Indian and Colonial Services. In other cases—school teachers are perhaps an example—a large part of the benefit of their education accrues as a general social advantage, rather than to their own salaries.

THOSE WHO BELIEVE in all or nearly all of the expense of education being provided from public funds—that is to say, the great majority of legislators and administrators all over the world—clearly recognise the social injustice of exceptional benefits arising from publicly provided education accruing to private individuals in the form of very high professional or managerial incomes. With strong political support, steps have been taken to reduce these exceptional differences between incomes by increasing facilities for professional training, by breaking down restrictive practices, and the like. Such steps are likely to be taken to an increasing degree in the future, quite apart from the imposition of taxation, which in nearly all countries is now steeply progressive, ensuring that a man who does earn a high income is only allowed to keep a limited part of it for himself. Britain, in common with nearly all other countries, has assumed that these processes can be progressively extended, till we end up by painlessly achieving an almost equalitarian society, even though some men show much greater ability and energy in their work, and some men have had a great deal more spent on their education than others.

This, however, is another illusion which is now in the process of being shattered, rapidly and completely. It has suddenly become apparent that there is an international market for skill and education, particularly for scientists and medical men, but also, to a considerable degree, for business managers also. There is no doubt about the "brain-drain." In a brilliant paper (recently presented to the Conference of the International Association for Research in Income

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and Wealth), Professor Brinley Thomas of the University of Wales pointed out that professional and technical workers now constituted 22% of all immigrant workers into the United States and Canada. Migration to the United States has recently taken 7% of our entire output of scientists and engineers—over 15% in the case of Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland. The only European countries not suffering seriously from "brain-drain" in this field are Italy and France—whether because their scientists have a greater sense of obligation to their native countries, because they are paid better salaries, or because they find it harder to speak English we cannot tell. In medicine the "brain-drain" appears to be worse. Even more serious is the fact that some 20% of the immigration of scientists and engineers to the United States is from Asian countries, whose need for them is desperate. Likewise more than half of the educated men from French-speaking West Africa, it is said, remain to practise in France.

IT WILL NOT BE LONG before voices are raised urging that such educated men should be forbidden to emigrate. In spite of the warning of the United Nations Charter, which proclaims the right of emigrating from one's country as one of the most basic of all rights, this is one of the most insidious temptations of the socialist state, which, if yielded to, leads to irredeemable evil—the concept that, because the State has paid for a man's education, then the man is somehow the State's property. One of the worst features of Stalin's tyranny—in fact a necessary condition for most of his other tyrannical acts—was that nobody could get out of Russia. The most interesting attribute of modern Yugoslavia is something which is not there, namely, a border fence.

No. Emigration cannot be prevented, either here, or in India, or in any country which values its freedom. What we must recognise is that, whether we like it or not, a rapid change is taking place in the economic position of educated men, as a consequence of their international mobility. Of the value of the education which they have received, a much higher proportion is now going to accrue to them in the form of their own incomes, and a consequently smaller proportion in the form of invisible social benefits. Except by drawing a Stalinist fence round the country—and even that is not likely to work satisfactorily—it will be impossible to prevent this. So let these highly trained and highly qualified men earn higher incomes, both pre-tax and post-tax. *But make them pay for their education.*

THE IDEA that universities should receive at any rate a substantial proportion of their income from fees charged to students, rather than from government grants, has recently been strongly urged by the Vice-Chancellors of Manchester and of Lancaster Universities. They have pointed out that this is the only possible way of securing for the universities some measure of independence, in face of ever-increasing threats of government control, and also that this will give the universities an incentive to organise their teaching more efficiently and less wastefully than it is organised now. Lord Robbins indignantly rejected the idea of any other than a trivial increase in University fees, and spoke of such proposals as "retrograde." Recently we have had the strange story of the Minister of Education requiring an increase in the fees charged to overseas students (it has been reported that this decision, on the face of it so "political," was in fact thought up by the Civil Service by some extraordinary process of reasoning, and passively accepted by the Minister), and the universities fervently resisting it, some to the extent of paying the difference in fees out of their own endowments.

This all goes to show, unfortunately, how utterly remote the academic mind at present is from any idea of the university as a fee-charging institution. Most academics are still living in a dream world in which they are to make all the decisions and the Government is to find all the money, and indeed deem it a privilege to do so. They will very soon be in for a rude awakening. Parliamentarians will say, with considerable justification, that they are failing in their duty to their constituents and taxpayers if they vote these large sums of money without exercising any control over the way in which they are spent. The grip of the government on the universities will rapidly tighten. And this will apply to the Oxford and Cambridge colleges too. These colleges may think that they are in a position to act independently because of their endowments. It might be a different matter if their endowments fully provided for their Fellows. But *in fact* they rely on University salaries for the greater part of their Fellows' incomes.

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Universities, therefore, should charge fees, related as closely as possible to the actual costs of teaching a subject, lower for the Arts, higher for Science, Medicine and Engineering. Scholarships should be available (as they were in the past) in limited numbers for exceptionally able candidates. There should also be a well-organised system, either through the universities or through outside bodies, whereby students whose families could not immediately pay for their expenses of education would be able to obtain loans at reasonable rates of interest. However, if they are to be legally free—as they must be—to emigrate as soon as they have graduated, it will be necessary to have these loans backed by some stable guarantor in this country—it is unlikely that lawyers will be able to agree on any international system for enforcing the payment of debts of this nature.

THERE ARE NOW a number of subjects, both in Arts and Sciences, studied by comparatively few students. Present provision for their teaching in too many universities is very wasteful of both staff and equipment. Under the pressure of having to earn fees to cover their costs, the universities would very quickly re-distribute these subjects among themselves so as to build up adequately-sized student classes in a limited number of universities. The University Grants Committee has signally failed to obtain such reorganisations under its present powers.

A considerable number of students now find their way into universities, it appears, not because they have a really strong desire to study any particular subject, but because they have done reasonably well in their *A*-level examinations, and are quite glad to accept three years at the university at someone else's expense in order to enable them to postpone having to make up their minds about what they really want to do. Such students would be deterred, as they should be, by a system of university fees. Universities, on the whole, will become considerably smaller, and the quality of the teaching should rise—Mr. Kingsley Amis' "more means worse"[1] going into reverse.

ARE THESE PROPOSALS going to mean unemployment for university teachers? Not at all. There are many remunerative alternative employments for them. Indeed there is a strong case for thinking that in recent years too many of the able men have gone into University teaching and research, and too few into industry.

Under a loan system, would there be a case for remitting some or all of the loan in the case of those who enter low paid but socially dependable occupations, particularly those who became teachers or clergymen? There is a case for doing so. But it would be better to raise incomes in these professions, if that could be done.

So it appears that we must look forward, at any rate for a considerable time to come, to comparatively higher incomes for educated men, and also to charging substantial fees to the young men who wish to train for these professions—there will be no lack of applicants. While the great inequalities of the past have been mitigated, we are not likely to be able to proceed much further in that direction, in spite of all our talk about equalitarian principles. After all, the principal opponents of equalitarianism are the Trades Unions.

[1] Kingsley Amis, "Lone Voices," ENCOUNTER, July 1960.

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Daniel Cory

Ezra Pound

A Memoir

WHEN in the early 1930s I visited Rapallo for the first time, I was not excited to hear that Ezra Pound was living within a stone's throw of my hotel. There were various reasons for my indifference. I had served several years of my long apprenticeship with Santayana, and thanks to his letters of introduction, I had become acquainted in London with several doyens of the literary establishment. It is disconcerting to remind younger readers that even as late as 1932 there was a formidable body of settled opinion that considered products like *The Waste Land, A Draft of XXX Cantos,* and *Ulysses,* as rather weird and unsavoury innovations. The more tolerant and amiable of the elders—my friend Desmond MacCarthy, for example—were inclined to shrug their shoulders and maintain that "time alone will establish" the suitability of rebels like Eliot, Pound and Joyce, for niches in a responsible pantheon. I did not find Logan Pearsall Smith so non-committal. When I hinted that I would like to meet T. S. Eliot, he snapped back that it would be to my disadvantage to "go slumming with such an eccentric fraud." Under the circumstances I thought it wiser not to mention Ezra, as Logan was reputed to have a "cardiac insufficiency." As for Santayana himself, the case was somewhat different. All he desired was to be left alone in Rome so that he could complete various projects —especially the four-volumed *Realms of Being.* It is doubtful if he appreciated fully what he read in *The Times Literary Supplement* or in Eliot's *The Criterion* about newly fledged "classics." I think he preferred, while the candles were still burning, to re-read old favourites of his youth like Lucretius, Dante, and Racine.

If I have tried to extenuate an early indifference to Ezra's work and the whole "literary revolution" largely instigated and led by him fifty years ago, let me confess at once that even as a young man I was something of an old fogey. I was disposed both by nature and education to side with whatever was settled in the conservative mind—be it literary or political. And when Ezra and his circle played tricks with our traditional metrical forms, and exhorted us to "make it new," I turned with relief to a minor but romantic fiddler, Richard le Gallienne, and cheered when he wrote—

> *I take no shame that still I sing the rose,*
> *The moon, and Helen's face....*

There is small wonder that a reading of *A Draft of XXX Cantos* made little impression on me. I was jolted by a violent juxtaposition of images, exasperated by a rash of quotations in foreign tongues, and a profusion of what Aldous Huxley called "liripips." The elastic form that Ezra had woven to embrace so many baffling items seemed to me the wrong kind of fishing-net for a poet.

So my first recollections of Ezra are fragmentary, and only bob up here and there in the bay of memory. I recapture him in a café on the front in Rapallo, with an open shirt, loose-fitting garments, and a crushed white hat. He was often surrounded by a small band of acolytes; if I remember correctly several of them were bearded like their superior, and I felt a bit naked and very much on the fringe of the discussion. One late afternoon a gaunt stooped figure passed slowly along the promenade, and his large black hat recalled portraits of old

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faded worthies who had given their lives in the service of the muse. It was William Butler Yeats. I went back to my hotel and read again the pamphlet that Yeats had recently written—*A Packet for Ezra Pound*.

LATER ON in the '30s I came to know Ezra quite well in Rapallo. The best time to find him was after dinner, and M. and I would join the Pounds for coffee at the same café-restaurant on the front. With the *brise marine* ruffling the low waves, and the dark hills in the background, Rapallo was—as Ezra put it—"hard to beat on the whole Mediterranean coast." And he and Dorothy had tried out quite a few places before settling down in 1924.

As the Pounds always struck us as being happy enough together, we had been surprised to gather from the gossip of the small English colony that for some time Ezra had been apportioning the seasons between Dorothy and the violinist Olga Rudge—or between Rapallo and Venice, if you prefer. Perhaps something I said to Ezra one evening betrayed the fact that I had got wind of this arrangement: he suddenly started to rave against the "middle-class mentality of this bloody English bunch." When the outburst had subsided, I observed that Dorothy must have been a lovely girl when he had first met her in England. He was silent for a moment before replying:

"Yes, she was. I fell in love with a beautiful picture that never came alive."

Even in those days, Ezra's occasional outbursts were disturbing: a chance irritation seemed to render him speechless until he could explode in vivid language. I recall him explaining some Chinese ideogram to me, and sketching with his thumbnail on the table-cloth the position of the "radicals." Without thinking I happened to mention Arthur Waley—I knew that Ezra had known him in London. But something must have happened in the meantime for poor Waley to be subjected to such a fusillade of expletives.

AS I WAS dabbling in poetry at the time, and Eliot had said that Ezra was *il miglior fabbro* ("the best craftsman") in the trade, I made bold to ask him one day if he would glance over my work. He agreed and invited me upstairs to "the office." The entrance was on the Via Marsala just behind the café, and I was astonished at the way he went bounding up the stone stairway to the flat on the topfloor. By the time I had reached the landing, rather winded, Ezra was already seated at his broad desk. His manner was professional—like that of a consultant surgeon—and he asked me whether I wanted a "detailed criticism" of my poems. I decided to show him first what I thought was my outstanding gem—a sonnet in the strict Petrarchan rime scheme, and proudly announced that it had been published in 1927 in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* (Chicago). "I got five dollars for it," I added. Ezra nodded and replied dryly that he had "heard of the magazine." I stood nervously behind him while he cupped his head of unruly hair in his hands and studied "Only in Words." After a few moments he picked up a large crayon and started to make substantial incisions in the flesh of my sonnet. "Just a minute," I cried out, "What's going on here anyway?" "Don't interrupt," Ezra mumbled, "I used to write one of these every morning before breakfast." I could endure the pain no longer, however, and asked him for the manuscript.

After thirty-five years I am still the proud possessor of this mutilated if partly ameliorated gem. And in order that the reader may judge for himself the technique of the operation, I will give the opening four lines of the original version:

There must be words lost in my mind somewhere—
words of a velvet texture, rose-soft hue—
that, could I marshal them, would give me you:
reveal your secrets, beautiful and rare.

Ezra had first stripped this full-blown quatrain down to its fighting "Imagist" weight by eliminating with the ruthless crayon what he considered were redundant or clogging phrases. He had then jotted down in the margin the following emendation *à la Pound*:

Words
lost in the mind—
of a velvet texture, rose-soft hue—
if I marshalled them
might give your secrets
beautiful and rare.

I now regret that I stopped Ezra from completing his operation. Not only would my sonnet have been given the "new look," but the *MS.* today might fetch a higher price in the market of archives. But my anguish in his

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"office" had been genuine. In the first place, I was then suspicious of the slimming exercises advocated by his school; and secondly, I had laboured so hard to get that difficult Italian rime-scheme (that delectable *abba, abba, cde, cde!*) that it hurt like hell to see it mutilated so pitilessly. But he did pay me one compliment, and incidently gave me one valuable tip, that I have never forgotten. Taking the bleeding sheet from my hand, and glancing afresh at "Only in Words," he remarked: "Your rimes don't strike me as being too obvious." Bless the old trooper! At least I was not guilty of riming "string bean" with "grass green" (*vide* Ella Wheeler Wilcox) in order to get the old chime!

BECAUSE OF my close association with George Santayana, and studies under Bertrand Russell when in London, I was full of philosophy in the '30s, and especially concerned with a cluster of riddles known to the trade as "epistemology." I think my enthusiasm must have been contagious. Ezra seemed interested if distrustful of the technical terminology I aired with such authority. When I spoke to him of the "projection of sense-data" involved in human perception, he shook his head and said it would be better to substitute a word like "sticking-out." In this distrust of professional jargon he was anticipating Wittgenstein, who has warned us of the grave mystification resulting from words "going on holiday" from their more menial tasks. All the same, Ezra was never at home in abstract or general ideas, and this probably accounts for the fact that he once said of T. E. Hulme's interest in philosophy that it was all "crap."

Ezra was then working on a batch of *Cantos* that belaboured the theme of the baleful effects of "money in history." It was apparent, however, that the overall structure of his "epic" was already beginning to worry him. He wanted if possible to lift and end the *Cantos* on some appropriate tableland of human insight—I think I suggested calling it a *dimension* of *benevolence*. I recall Ezra saying that the "trouble is there ain't enough benevolent folk I know about." Of course such well-known figures as Socrates or Jesus would not do for Ezra. But he did feel the necessity for a handful of respectable worthies, even if old-fashioned American Founding Fathers, to join Confucius & Co. in an exclusive circle of Goodwill, Natural Piety, and Ineffable Illumination.

IN THE SPRING of 1937 it occurred to Ezra that Santayana might be of some help to him. And what more convenient whetstone to sharpen your intellectual tools than a distinguished philosopher who was also living in Italy? Now, part of my job with Santayana had been to protect him from unnecessary intrusions, and I was afraid that Ezra might interrupt him to no purpose. So at first I tried to discourage the prospect of their meeting. I told Ezra that Santayana was wedded to solitude and preoccupied with his own work. "What on earth have you and he in common?" I demanded bluntly. Nevertheless, before I left for Switzerland, I promised to get into touch with Santayana, and Ezra said that he was prepared to send him one of his books—I think either the *Cavalcanti* or the *Notes on Fenollosa*.

About a fortnight later I received the following letter from Santayana:

Cortina d'Ampezzo
July 1, 1937

For heaven's sake, dear Cory, do stop Ezra Pound from sending me his book. Tell him that I have no sense for true poetry, admire (and wretchedly imitate) only the putrid Petrarch and the miserable Milton; that I don't care for books, hardly have any, and would immediately send off his precious volume to the Harvard library or to some other cesspool of infamy. That is, if he made me a present of it. If he sent it only for me to look at and return, I would return it unopened; because I abhor all connection with important and distinguished people, and refuse to see absolutely anyone except some occasional stray student or genteel old lady from Boston. . . .

I passed on the news to Ezra and received this characteristic reply:

Rapallo
4 Lug/ or
the natnl hollerday

Waaal; me dear Dan'l, I caynt say wot ole Jarge sounds like his fly/loserfy had done his digestion much good//but he haint troubled my sleep for the past 30 years, and I reckon I wunt lose much now.

Humsumever; sensitivity iz rare in dis woild/ and 25 years at Hawvud is enugh I should/think to turn any blokes liver.

Mebbe you better let it alone/on the other hand you can, if you like, tell Jarge I don't believe it/ and I bet he haint seen no more old ladies from Bastun than I have/and I don't believe he agrees

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with ole Sprague, the hawvud sheconomist. Waal, mebbe you better let it alone/
regards to the missus. EZ P

When I returned to Rapallo in 1938, Ezra asked me if I would like to review his forthcoming book—*A Guide to Kulchur*—for *The Criterion*. I discovered that he had already written to Eliot on 16 April that—

> ...ole Danl Cory is the only bloke wot would think about the more serious passages in the woik. It would have to be over a pussydonym cause Santyyanner would sack him if he said anything good about the book....

There was no need for Ezra to worry. After a cursory survey of an advance copy it was obvious to an old fogey that it was wiser to have nothing whatever to do with it. If I had reviewed it I would have expressed the same opinion as I did later on in the year to Eliot, at Faber and Faber, in London. After "the Possum" had explained to me that he only smoked French cigarettes because any other brand irritated his sinuses, he asked me why I had refused the job. I answered that I thought *Kulchur* was only the "raw material of a book —the book itself had not been written." Eliot pushed his chair back from the desk, gazed at the ceiling over his spectacles, and then remarked that it was all "rather exasperating."

I remained in England all the next winter, but on 5 January of the new year (1939), I heard from Santayana of his first meeting with Ezra:

Hotel Bristol
Rome

Dear Cory,

Yesterday evening I had a visit from—*Ezra Pound!* He is taller, younger, better-looking than I had expected. Reminded me of several old friends (young, when I knew them) who were spasmodic rebels, but decent by tradition, emulators of Thoreau, full of scraps of culture but lost, lost, lost in the intellectual world. He talked rather little (my fault and that of my deaf ear, that makes me not like listening when I am not sure what has been said), and he made no breaks, such as he indulges in in print. Was he afraid of me? How odd! such a dare-devil as he poses as! I had just been reading his article, and the one about him, in the *Criterion*, so that I felt no chasm between us—"us" being my sensation of myself and my idea of him.

We mentioned Rimbaud, and he immediately (was it telepathy?) said "*L'Auberge vertel* He never got to anything better than that."

His beard is like a painter's and his head of hair (is it a wig?) like a musician's. On the whole we got on very well, but nothing was said except commonplace....

The fact that Ezra was so demure in the presence of Santayana was due largely to my having built up such a formidable picture of my old master in our conversations in Rapallo. In my desire to ward off their meeting, I had not only mentioned how busy Santayana was with his own work, but I had stressed his aloofness and dread of interruption. Ezra was not the type to be deterred for long, and as later letters have revealed, he was being diplomatic and waiting for the ice to melt before attempting to interest Santayana in various projects.

When France was invaded in early June 1940, I was isolated in Switzerland, and it was sheer good luck rather than foresight that enabled me to book a cabin on the last American ship leaving Genoa for New York. Santayana had decided to "stick it out" in Rome—and Ezra was somewhere in Italy. But after settling down on Long Island I would hear irregularly from Santayana, and he wrote now and then of some further meetings with Ezra, either in Rome or Venice. It is only recently, however, that I have been privileged to read an exchange of letters between them during the early years of the war. These letters touch on various literary topics, the *Cantos*, Confucius and Mencius, ideograms and their meanings, and Ezra's vain effort to enlist both Eliot and Santayana in his proposal for a "new Paideuma." As regards this last venture, Eliot had commented that Santayana would lend an "air of respectability" to a work that purported (rather ambitiously) to offer a list of assigned readings, drawn from all sources, for the amelioration of the decadent academic world. Needless to say, Santayana had politely declined, "having no ideas on education and not being a reformer." But he did go so far as to state that he did not think it mattered so much "what books people read as long as they read the *same* books." In other words, the flowering of any kind of culture (or "kulchur") presupposes a common ground for discussion.

Concerning the other topics dealt with in their correspondence, it would be unfair to say that there was a total failure of communication. To a certain extent, Ezra did succeed in interesting Santayana; for example, in regard to the Chinese written character. But when it

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came to a shuttlecock of philosophical ideas, any comments or distinctions that Santayana made in an effort to help Ezra were batted out of court. It was always a case of a professional poet searching for what he thought the movement of the *Cantos* required; and therefore ignoring the irrelevant (for his purposes) suggestions of a more tidy and disciplined mind. So Ezra was content to report what Mencius had to say about the "sequence," and Santayana's classic elucidation of the difference between an Aristotelian and Humian analysis of "causation" had no appreciable effect.

Santayana once confessed to me that he had a very inadequate knowledge of Plato because he had not given his life to a study of Greek philosophy. And Eliot has written that it was a realisation of the enormous amount of time and labour demanded that prompted him to abandon the study of Pali under Professor Woods at Harvard. "The Possum" was afraid to stray too far afield and lose his centre of reference—European civilisation. But Ezra all his literary life has made raids on difficult and remote texts that are beyond the ken of a normally-educated adult. He has also dipped into history and economics to find evidence that might buttress his private prejudices. A professional poet *par excellence* has been at work, rather than a Hellenist or Latinist or Sinologist. The danger is that he may have lost the shape and movement of the *Cantos* in a rick of "scraps of culture."

I WAS out of touch with Ezra for some years. When I returned to Europe and renewed my association with Santayana after the war, Ezra was in what he called the "bug-house," St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington.

But two years after Santayana had died, I returned again to America for the academic year 1954–55. One of my duties as "Santayana Fellow" at Harvard was to gather and edit all the interesting letters of my old master that were accessible for the Scribner Collection. So I wrote to Ezra in the "bug-house" and asked him if if he had anything that he would be willing to have included. And I was rewarded by a copy of a letter he had received from Santayana in February 1950. It was the familiar shuttlecock again: a patient reply to a spontaneous but philosophically naïve note from Ezra. It transpired that just before Christmas Ezra had conveyed the "season's greetings" by air-mail, and scrawled his "respect for the kind of intelligence that enables the cherry-stone to make cherry; the grass seed to make grass." Santayana had replied that "it would be fussy to object to your word 'intelligence' to describe that potentiality in the cherry-stone; somehow it possesses a capacity to develop other cherries under favourable circumstances without getting anything wrong. That is 'intelligence' of an unconscious sort. I agree in respecting it."

This conciliatory observation had not satisfied Ezra, and he wrote to me at Harvard demanding "How the HELL does he know it's 'unconscious'?" From a strict epistemological angle one must admit that neither Santayana nor an arboriculturist "knows" whether or not a cherry-stone is consciously striving to produce future cherries; on the other hand, it does seem a bit far-fetched, an abuse of analogy, to insist that a stone or a seed is akin to a little moral entity seeking to realise some clearly conceived goal. But if I had informed Ezra that there is a difference between a teleological and a naturalistic explanation, I would have run the risk of being told that I was talking "crap." As Ezra's poetry is not encumbered with "trailing clouds of glory," "sobbing stars" and "bleeding roses," it is rather surprising that his imagination should have been enticed by the *shrewdness* of a cherry-stone.

IN THE AUTUMN of 1959 I met Ezra again—and quite unexpectedly. My wife and I were looking for a place to settle down in Italy, and as Rapallo had been so congenial before the war, we hoped to find an inexpensive flat there. One evening I spotted a familiar shape turning into a side-street. "Ezra!" I cried out. "Do you remember me? I'm the antient fragments." (Ezra had always pulled my leg about a book written years ago by a Reverend Cory entitled *The Antient Fragments of Egypt*).

I was surprised that he had not altered more after thirteen years in a "bug-house" and he whisked us off to an apartment where he was living with Dorothy and a literary young lady from Texas who had visited him often in St. Elizabeth's Hospital. No doubt she had lightened his hours considerably and so helped Dorothy in her thankless task; and when Ezra was finally released, she had become his secretary and disciple. It was obvious that Ezra was fond of her: I think she was the embodiment to him of an almost forgotten springtime.

To celebrate our reunion, Ezra opened a

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bottle of Canadian whisky. We then heard how they had tried living first at Brunnenburg, a romantic old castle above Merano in the South Tyrol, where Ezra's daughter Mary and her husband, Prince Boris de Rachewiltz, were established. It appeared that everything had been done to make him comfortable: all his books had been shelved and an enormous body of manuscripts, letters and magazines, were being sorted out and filed by the Australian poet Noel Stock. But Brunnenburg had certain physical disadvantages as well (I was to learn later) as the difficulty of accommodating the young Texan lady to an unusual, mixed foreign setting. A long steep *salita* had to be climbed to reach the Dorf Tirol—a small village with a local post-office and general store.

We lingered on in Rapallo for several more days and I had an opportunity to discuss some distinguished old friends of Ezra's. Of Joyce's *Ulysses* he said that the "job had been done once and for all," and that it would be futile for anyone to attempt "that kind of a work again." As for Ford Madox Ford, Ezra said he was one of the few people who had taught him anything about writing (Avoid superfluous adjectives!). When I asked him about the boxing lessons that Hemingway had given him in Paris, Ezra laughed. "Mike Strater was the only one of the bunch who could really give Hem a work-out—I just pawed about with him. Perhaps Hem had too much respect for the future of literature to take it out on me." He then showed me a cheque for a thousand dollars that he had framed and hung on the wall. Hemingway had sent it to him when he left St. Elizabeth's Hospital: it was evident that the friendship between them had remained firm and unclouded by events. I suspect, however, that Hemingway's influence had not been entirely beneficial. He may have stirred in Ezra that native ideal of the "tough guy" that appeals to so many American writers and prompts them to make "bums" of themselves in print. I detect something of this tendency in various passages in the *Cantos*.

The following winter I was in Rome, and one afternoon in February Ezra called me up at my hotel. He had changed considerably since I saw him in Rapallo: he was frankly embarrassed by his erratic nervous condition. As he said: "One day I talk like a parrot and the next I can find nothing to say." All attempts to settle down again had failed during the recent months. For one thing, the young lady had returned to Texas and Ezra missed her. A source of stimulation had been taken from him, and after all those years of incarceration it was not encouraging to realise that the future promised little but a succession of grey hours. Ezra made an effort to be cheery which I found quite touching in the more level glow of my early memories of him. It was obvious that some profound emotional ebb-tide was leaving him stranded and incapable of any sustained concentration. The old trooper had lost all his bravado: he was thoroughly down-hearted—*avvilito* is the Italian word for it.

When I told him that we were still looking for a place to live in Italy, he suggested that we might try Brunnenburg and said that he would write to his daughter about us. And when he added that he might "give the castle another chance" himself, it was an additional inducement to move there in the spring.

IT DID NOT take long to discover that we were entrenched in the headquarters of what I might call the "Pound Club." The atmosphere at Brunnenburg was one of unqualified devotion to the Poet. His bust by Gaudier-Brzeska had been transplanted with great difficulty from Rapallo to the large garden on the ground-floor and seemed to focus in the moonlight the mysteries of initiation. All discussion presupposed that there was only one poet of the 20th century *digne de son nom*: Yeats and Eliot might be respected, but they belonged to a different category. The *Cantos* were the great modern "classic": if one hesitated to speak of an "epic" it was only because it was difficult to find any sustained narrative in the poem—and the language was not invariably "elevated." Mary de Rachewiltz was the official translator of her father's works into Italian, and Eva Hesse—a close friend and visitor from Munich —was performing a parallel metamorphosis into the German tongue. Sometimes when we gathered together in the evening the discussion would be enlivened by the tracking down of elusive references in the *Cantos*: it recalled exciting games of "treasure-hunt" one used to play around Christmas ("You're getting WARM now!"). Noel Stock had the best nose in the pack, and occasional visitors like Vannie Scheiwiller (Ezra's publisher from Milan) or Donald Gallup glided easily into the spirit of the club-room. I was a little bewildered by everything. I had never lived in an intellectual

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closed-shop with either Santayana or Russell, but then they were philosophers who were accustomed to wrangling with alternative points of view.

Later on in the summer Ezra and Dorothy turned up from Rapallo. We all hoped that despite the remoteness of the castle on its enormous promontory of limestone, he would settle down and find some compensation in the clean cool air and distant prospects from window and balcony. But he was inconsolable; and although Noel Stock was doing a pretty thorough job, highly agitated over the precise whereabouts of each and every item that combined to compose another mountain of manuscripts, rare magazines, and innumerable letters. To save or not to save, that was the question! So under the circumstances Ezra could hardly be expected to look up to the everlasting hills for strength and peace of mind. Sometimes he would emerge for a short spell from the seclusion of his study and become more convivial. There was nearby a small reservoir swollen by subterranean streams where we went for a quick plunge on hot days, or after a long hike. On several occasions Ezra amazed us by scrambling down the hillside and leaping at once into the icy water. He would thrash about and spout like a whale before joining the company on the grassy slopes. Only too soon, however, he would return to the castle and for the rest of the day recline on his couch, remembering the mountains of Cabaret.

I WOULD LIKE TO RECORD a good turn he did me one day in September. I was trying to finish my memoirs of Santayana in time for the centenary, and as Ezra's knowledge of French was quite exceptional, I sought his advice in regard to a passage from Alain's *Les Dieux* that Santayana had quoted to me in a letter of 28 July 1935:

> I have come to the end of Alain's book.... This is his last sentence:
> *"L'esprit saura se priver de puissance, de toute espèce de puissance; tel est le plus haut règne. Or, le Calvaire annonce cela même, de si eloquente et de si violente façon, que je ne aucun commentaire."*
> What do you think of that? *G. S.*

Although he hardly felt up to doing anything, Ezra took the letter and walked over to his desk. And when he cupped his head of unruly hair in his hands, it recalled that day many years ago when he had mutilated my sorry sonnet in Rapallo. After a few moments (I think he was really interested in Alain's *thought*) he wrote the following translation on a big sheet of paper:

> The spirit will be able (will know enough) to deprive itself of power, of every *kind* of power. That is the highest Kingdom. Now Calvary announces this very thing, in so eloquent, and so violent a way, that I will add no commentary whatsoever.

The day before I left Brunnenburg for England, I went to his study again to say goodbye. He stood by the window for a few minutes without speaking, and then coming towards me he said quietly:

"I'm sorry I couldn't be brighter this summer."

He seemed so shattered in spirit that I felt like crying.

"I wish I could do something for you," I mumbled. "What is really the matter with you, Ezra?"

He put his arm around my shoulder.

"God only knows," he answered in a low, broken voice.

THE FOLLOWING YEAR, after correcting the galley-proofs of my book, I was at a loss as to what to do next. So when we returned to Brunnenburg in the spring, I decided that it was high time to study Ezra's works more seriously. I have mentioned earlier the exasperation I once felt in the '30s when reading *A Draft of XXX Cantos*; and I confessed that as a young man I was an old fogey. But perhaps something had happened in the meantime to dispel that morning foginess. And in order to do the job thoroughly, I went back to his early poetry—to that body of verse he composed during his London years.

I had never realised before how exquisite in texture, how utterly original in tone, are some of these short pieces. Take, for example, the following lines from "Dance Figure":

Dark eyed,...
Ivory sandalled,
There is none like thee among the dancers,
None with swift feet....

Thine arms are as a young sapling under the bark;
Thy face as a river with lights.

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White as an almond are thy shoulders;
As new almonds stripped from the husk....

As a rillet among the sedge are thy hands upon me;
Thy fingers a frosted stream.

And also the first stanza of "The Return":

See, they return; ah, see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the uncertain
Wavering!
See, they return, one, and by one,
With fear, as half-awakened;
As if the snow should hesitate
And murmur in the wind,
and half-turn back;
These were the 'Wing'd-with-Awe',
Inviolable.

Although it is better to consider "Envoi" as an extraordinary *tour de force*—an evocation of a lost music and faded glory of the English language, it remains absolutely unique in twentieth-century poetry. Herbert Read was not exaggerating when he said that "few English poets have written so many fragments of perfect verse." One can prophesy with a measure of confidence that no responsible anthology compiled in the future can afford to omit some dozen or so of Ezra's early pieces.

But everyone I talked to seemed to be preoccupied with the *Cantos*. And since Ezra had been working on them for over forty-five years, and the poem was still unfinished, such an exclusive excitement was understandable if misleading as a basis for an appraisal of his total poetical corpus. Beyond the parapets of Brunnenburg, however, there were rumours that mocked the loyal atmosphere of the "Pound Club." Graham Hough, for example, in his *Image and Experience*, complained of a "lunatic jumble of asyntactical English, tags of Latin, Greek, Italian, German and French, interspersed with Chinese ideograms which have neither auditory nor conceptual significance for the Western reader...." And when I compared this with a current announcement in *The Times Literary Supplement* that the *Cantos* were drawing to a "triumphant close," it not only made me scratch my head but order at once the latest edition that embraced the section entitled "Thrones."

My intention was simply to read and enjoy the poem if possible. And the initiates had encouraged me by saying that it did not really matter (despite the fun of "treasure-hunts") whether or not I spotted all the elusive references. As for my suspicion regarding an overall structure, or ruling pattern that might satisfy traditional aesthetic criteria, that too, while lamentable, could be shelved for the time being.

Alas! After perusing for several weeks a baffling text I not only discovered that my first reaction to the *Cantos* was confirmed, but I was haunted by a recurrent sensation of not getting anywhere. It was not because the long poem had no narrative to help it along: I failed to discern how the various parts (or themes) held together. Just because this or that idea had popped into Ezra's stream of consciousness did not seem either a necessary or sufficient condition for putting it into print. I was still arrested by brief intermittent passages of exceptional beauty, but embarrassed by the insertion of extraneous jottings that suggested that Ezra had lost control of the relevant material that might have knit the poem into an aesthetic whole. He was constantly stepping outside the proper structure of his work to vent his rage over certain obstinate evils that he found in the economic and political story of Western civilisation. The poet was smothered by the reformer; the Muses shunned by the prophet: the "poem" collapsed into a kind of commonplace book, or agenda, that recorded sundry things that had interested him over the years. As such it remains a self-revealing if (for me) exasperating human document. For the form has become so elastic in the later cantos that it can embrace that loose and incoherent emergence of items that we suffer in a dream. Only the heart-rending occasional flashes of beauty remind us of the neglected vocation of the greatest young poet of the century.

FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS Ezra has been residing in either Venice or San Ambrogio above Rapallo. In 1962 he was faced with a difficult operation and his doctor in Merano advised him to seek a specialist elsewhere. He needed constant attention and Dorothy could, in her own words, "no longer cope with the situation." So it was a question of being confined to a nursing-home or returning to the more efficient Olga; and as Ezra had had enough of confinement in recent years, he chose the latter alternative.

Venice is only a few hours from Merano by train, and my wife and I would quite often join Ezra and Olga for luncheon or dinner at

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a nearby *pensione-ristorante*, the "Cici." Conversation was usually rather forced, as Ezra was either bored or lost in despondency. He made an effort to listen at times, especially if I steered the talk back some fifty years or so to Connie Mack and the old Philadelphia Athletics, or London before the first war, or Joyce and Hemingway and Wyndham Lewis in Paris. A nod or twinkle of the eye would signify that he was following a drift of once familiar persons and places. Physically he seemed in fair shape for a man who had just turned eighty, and to walk with him was an agreeable experience as he knew Venice stone by stone, as Santayana had once known Rome when we strolled about together. But I wanted to discuss some questions in earnest with Ezra if possible, and it was not until one afternoon in early October 1966, that I found him in the right frame of mind to do so.

To begin with, I asked him to confirm some facts about his early years, and he told me that although he had lectured once at Oxford, he had later declined to do so at Cambridge. "That was another one of my mistakes," he added. "J. C. Squire had said that I 'owed it' to myself to accept such an opportunity."

Then I got around to the *Cantos*. I remarked on the difficulty of composing a long poem, a modern variation of "epic proportions," without some prior blueprint, or conventional theological scaffolding (Dante and Milton) to buttress the "high argument." Even Lucretius had a materialistic atomic underpinning to explain and carry his *De Rerum Natura*. And Chaucer at least knew quite definitely where he was going; to wit, Canterbury. Perhaps we might say that the *Cantos* reflected faithfully the incoherence or fragmentary insights of the contemporary writer in a cosmopolitan milieu. Finally, some critics had claimed that they could detect "the structure of a fugue"—although I had been taught by Santayana that sounds had a "free development," while words were supposed to be more or less moored to their "referents."

But Ezra scotched all these fashionable hypotheses with one short devastating sentence.

"It's a botch," he said firmly.

"Do you mean it didn't come off?" I asked rather artlessly.

"Of course it didn't," Ezra mumbled. "That's what I mean when I say I botched it."

I was flabbergasted and could find nothing to say. Then he carried on with many pauses:

"I knew too little about so many things. I've read too little and I read very slowly."

"But you can't know everything," I protested. "It's impossible for a human mind—especially nowadays."

He was not satisfied.

"Ain't it better to know something about a few things if you're trying to do a work like the *Cantos*?"

Again I was at a loss for words. After a long hesitation Ezra resorted to a rather striking illustration. He mentioned a shop-window full of various objects.

"I picked out this and that thing that interested me, and then jumbled them into a bag. But that's not the way to make"—and he paused for a moment—"a *work of art.*"

After so many years of labour on his long poem, this confession of an artistic failure moved me profoundly. And by way of possible consolation I repeated what I had already told him on previous occasions—namely, that I was convinced that at least a dozen of his early poems would survive all the "siftings of oblivion." He avoided any definite answer by mentioning another poet of great promise in the old London years.

"How about that poem Hulme wrote on 'The Embankment'?"

"That's another lovely piece," I agreed. And the silence that followed was enhanced by a remote "finesse of fiddles" and "flash of gold heels on the hard pavement."

On our last evening in Venice we went over to say goodbye, and I had a chance to be alone with him for a while. He was rather tired as he had been to the dentist with Olga in the afternoon. I started off by remarking how irresponsible many contemporary poets seemed to be, and what liberties they were inclined to take with syntax in order to achieve certain dubious effects. As Ezra did not appear very impressed, I tried to cover up my complaint by admitting that even a poet like Mallarmé had "played tricks with grammar." This last observation provoked an answer:

"It's all right to play tricks with grammar if you know what you're doing. The trouble is that some people ain't got no grammar—don't know the difference between an adjective and an adverb."

After these comments on prevailing poetical manners, I shifted closer to my objective. I told

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Ezra that I was thinking of writing something about him in the near future—something that might embrace my impressions before the war and in more recent years. Perhaps "Yesterday and Today" might be a suitable title. He nodded and said "You might make an article of disconnected notes." Then I told him frankly that I had been mulling over what he had said a few days previously, and that I really wanted to know whether his confession of an artistic failure was a deliberate condemnation of the *Cantos*, or just due to his profound depression.

"Do you or do you not consider the poem a botch—that it didn't come off as you had hoped it would?"

He picked his nails for a moment and then answered:

"Yop, I botched it."

I settled for this blunt confirmation, but reminded Ezra that a man's judgment of his own work did not necessarily coincide with the verdict of posterity.

"Think of Keats," I added, "and his last days in Rome. Spitting blood all over the Piazza di Spagna and telling Severn to have graved on his headstone: *Here lies one whose name was writ in water.*"

Ezra looked up and gave a sort of half-chuckle. Then Olga and my wife came upstairs and we had a farewell whisky before leaving around eleven o'clock.

PERHAPS I have been somewhat indiscreet in recording these bits of conversation and impressions of Ezra Pound and his work. But I have not been guilty of snap judgments, nor unaware of the possibility that I may ruffle some already exacerbated feelings, including his own. This is the risk that even a friend must take if he is bent on reporting a "cause aright, to the unsatisfied." It goes without saying that Ezra has made an enormous impact on the intellectual world of his day. And being a philosopher by trade, I have analysed his contribution into four factors:

He will be remembered as the chief instigator and organiser of the "literary revolution" that got under way in London just before the first world war. More than anyone else, by his own poetry and criticism and encouragement to his fellow-workers, Ezra led the "men of 1914" (as Wyndham Lewis called them) against the establishment. There is no question but that he helped to launch the other three big names of the revolutionary quartet—Eliot, Joyce, and Lewis.

He will be remembered as the "poet's poet." Just as in the world of golf, Jimmy Demaret was known as the "pro's pro," so Ezra was the one man that even Yeats or Eliot would have consulted if anything had gone amiss with their poetic "swing."

He will be remembered as the translator who reformed the whole business of transplanting a poem from one language into another. Nothing has been the same, for better or for worse, since the advent of *Cathay* and his *Homage to Sextus Propertius*.

Lastly, and for me by far the most important side of his contribution, he has given us some dozen early poems that will endure as long as the English language.

Time alone will sift in Ezra's work the essential from the contingent, the permanent from the fugacious, the gold from the dross. But let Mallarmé say it for me—

Tel qu'en lui-même enfin l'éternité le change. . . .

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Column

It is part of the predicament in which Americans find themselves today that, though millions of them recognise it for what it is, they can see no way out of it. Protests, marches, demonstrations may no doubt ease consciences and help to release frustrated indignation, but they do nothing to alter the course of American policy. Until very recently, one of the basic factors in the situation has been the total political ineffectiveness of the American liberal and radical movement. Under President Kennedy, it had a direct and significant influence on the formulation and execution of policy. Under President Johnson, it had become a shout in the streets.

This was as apparent to many Americans as it is to anyone else, and it inspires profound doubts and self-questionings about what kind of people they have become and what kind of country they live in. Can it really be America and Americans who in Viet Nam are waging a colonial war of the utmost savagery and are now arming to suppress a Negro revolt in its cities? The image created by such policies has made America unrecognisable, except to her enemies.

It is perhaps a sign of how deeply Americans are troubled and bewildered that two highly respectable and influential magazines, the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's*, should have devoted almost the whole of their March issues to what is in effect an enquiry into the State of the Nation. It is perhaps equally significant that the enquiries should have been entrusted, not to highly organised research teams, *Insight*-squads equipped with all those statistical and analytical tools with which American sociology is so heavily armed, but to single individuals: as if Americans, despairing of the condition to which computers and cost effectiveness have reduced them, have despaired also of the instruments which have helped to create it.

The *Atlantic Monthly* entrusted its enquiry, early in 1967, to Dan Wakefield, aged thirty-five, born in Indiana, educated at Columbia, a skilled and sensitive journalist who now holds a Nieman fellowship at Harvard. His assignment was to "portray what you can of the entire great, ingenious, rich and poverty-stinking, beautiful and beer-can-glittery, generous and selfish, mixed-up and marching straight on to what? (a bigger and better destiny or the primitive asphalt swamp?), powerful yet impotent, clear-the-slums and kill-the-goddamn-grizzlies, pick-your-1968-Choice and take-your-chances kind of country this is."

I don't know who wrote this assignment but he ought to be ashamed of himself; one feels like saying to him that you cannot hope to analyse America's ills, but only make them worse, if you write like this. Fortunately, Dan Wakefield does not aspire to this kind of prose or share the schizophrenia which seems to inspire it. His long report, under the title *Supernation at Peace and War*, is cool, sober, dispassionate and sets down with admirable objectivity what he has seen and heard during many months of travelling throughout the United States. He has interviewed draft evaders in Toronto; hippies in Haight-Ashbury; cocktail-party liberals; respectable citizens who have been driven into the streets by their feelings about Viet Nam; Green Berets converted to pacifism; earnest Middle-Western ladies who organise Town Meetings to bridge the gulf between old and young; youthful Ché Guevaras of the Campus; Black Power agitators and the police whose duty it is to thwart them; football coaches who kneel in prayer with the team before the game; Lions, Moose, Elks, Rotarians, Kiwanis; men and women of the Silent Centre; retired "concrete citizens" of Sun City, Arizona; embattled warriors against ANTI-GOD COMMUNISM; American War Mothers and mothers of dead Viet Nam heroes; Red Indians; John Wayne's son; the Vice-President of the United States; Dean Rusk; anyone and everyone who might reveal some aspect of the truth about the Supernation he has set out to describe.

What kind of picture does he leave us with? To me, at least, a curiously muted one of a nation in turmoil; perhaps indeed that is its merit and intention, given the more highly coloured accounts to which we have become accustomed. Yet, given also the bewildering variety of people and places he visited, it is strangely grey and monochrome; nearly everyone he meets, however detestable their opinions or eccentric their behaviour, at heart is a nice guy, as if in the breasts of dove and hawk alike there beats the heart of a Babbitt. After all, Mr. Wakefield seems to be saying, they are all Americans under their skins.

I am sure there is a kind of truth in this. The great wave of anti-Americanism which threatens to overwhelm us all makes many people forget the fundamental decencies, the kindness and generosity, the general large-hearted amiability, of American life. And yet

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to emphasise this, however justly, only serves to make even more glaring, and less intelligible, the contradiction between what Mr. Wakefield's Americans are at heart and what their government does in their name and they do in the service of their government. Yet this, precisely, is what we wish and need to understand.

One explanation of it of course may be that the individual opinions, feelings, motives, behaviour, of Mr. Wakefield's Americans no longer matter, and that they are now all equally the victims of a vast, impersonal, autonomous, military-industrial machine which has no place for the human being except for the function he performs in it; every other aspect of him is so much military-industrial waste which can be extruded from the system, all the more so because it no longer requires his decision-making capacity. I am sure there are many anarchists in the Pentagon. From this point of view one might say that Mr. Wakefield's assignment, however well he has performed it, was from the start a misguided one; it is no longer the individual who requires study, but the machine which he serves.

THE SECOND CONTRIBUTION, from *Harper's*, to a State of the Union message is something very different from the *Atlantic Monthly*'s. It is no wide-ranging survey of the American scene but simply an account of one single, brief incident in recent American history. It makes no attempt to be objective or detached but describes the violent, complicated and confused response of one all-too-human human being to an event in which he was himself a leading actor. And lastly, it is not written by a skilled reporter but by one whom I believe to be a great writer, Norman Mailer. Certainly his article *The Steps of the Pentagon* is a masterpiece, which no one else could have written.

It must at once be confessed that Mailer does not make things easy for those who, like myself, both admire and like him immensely; and there are many things in his article which are likely to give offence. But Mailer's enormities, either in literature or in life, are really the least important things about him. What is important is that he speaks with a voice which is always unmistakably his own, that he has an almost uncanny imaginative understanding of the processes which make American life what it is, and that the impact of his writing and his personality is the result, not of some God-given grace, but of an unending stubborn struggle to assert his individuality in an age when the individual is at the heaviest of discounts. It has been the ambition of many writers in the United States to write a great American tragedy. Sometimes it seems as if Mailer *is* the great American tragedy, not unmixed with music-hall farce.

The incident he has taken as the subject of his article is the March on the Pentagon organised and led, in October 1967, by a group of American intellectuals as a protest against the war in Viet Nam. It ended in the arrest of Mailer, and several others, and indeed to get themselves arrested was the object of the leaders, as a means of demonstrating as publicly and strikingly as possible their opposition to the policies which are at present being pursued by their government.

To some people such an event may seem just one more exhibitionist and self-lacerating demonstration by the ineffectual angels of the American Left, a matter as much for laughter as for tears, and certainly without the slightest effect on the course of American policy. To Mailer, this aspect of the March, and of his own part in it, is as clear as to anyone who holds the word *intellectual* in contempt, but both because and despite of this, he sees the March as a symbol of what is happening in America today, a meeting-point of all those conflicting forces which have reduced her to her present condition. It was for him, as a novelist, something given, such as Henry James loved, infinitely rich in its suggestions, its endless and labyrinthine implications, which taken together compose a marvellous picture of what it means to be an American today.

The March was also a novelist's dream in the sense that it presented, made to measure as it were, a cast of characters who between them seem to cover the whole range of the predicament to which the American intellectual is exposed. Three of them in particular stimulate Mailer to a kind of happy frenzy of response. There is Mailer himself, whose adventures and misadventures in Washington he views with the delighted and yet appalled eye of an artist for whom he himself has become the most absurd and monstrous of his own creations. And beside the Novelist, there is the Poet, Robert Lowell, and the Critic, Dwight Macdonald, who play an equally significant part in the tragi-comedy. Mailer traces the steps of these three strangely assorted musketeers with an enraptured, yet tortured amazement, asking himself at every moment what the devil he is doing in such company, from which he is divided by so much, and with which he so unwillingly accepts that he has anything in common. But if the drama has not one but three Hamlets (and it is in fact a drama of indecisions, hesitations, ambiguities), it also has a host of attendant lords; Dr. Benjamin Spock, whom Mailer dislikes because he associates him with quarrels with three divorced wives about bringing up

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children; the two Goodmans, Mitch and Paul; de Grazia, the slim and elegant young Sicilian, with a touch of the young Sinatra, who is in charge of some of the preparations for the march; William Sloane Coffin, Jr., Chaplain of Yale, sincere, athletic and effective, of whom Mailer does not fail to note that he looks like any Young Executive of the Year on a cover of *Time* or *Fortune*.

The spirit of farce is never far away from Mailer's experience in Washington, and yet it never obscures what is also the genuine tragedy of the situation, which lies essentially in the direct confrontation between this motley assembly of individuals, largely leaderless because they have such an embarrassment of leaders, like a Mexican army which is all generals, and the Powers of Darkness enshrined in the unshaken, and unshakeable fortress of the Pentagon; if Mailer had wanted an alternative title for his article, he might have considered *Childe Harold to the Dark Tower came*. The waves of the marchers melt away on its steps as if they had never been. There is a moment of panic, terrible like all moments of panic, when, faced by the police, the marchers turn tail and run and Mailer finds himself instinctively and humiliatingly diving for cover, only to look up out of his ditch to see the WASP figure of Dwight Macdonald standing unmoved amid the fleeing ranks, as if meditating some particular abstruse problem in political analysis.

WHAT CONCERNS Mailer most, when he can detach his novelist's eye from such incidents, or the imbecilities of his own behaviour, is how it has come about that the politics of radicalism, of the revolt against the incipient authoritarianism symbolised by the Pentagon, should be reduced to such impotent gestures of protest and that he himself should be sharing in them. What, if anything, unites him, ex-Communist, ex-hipster, ex-White Negro, Marxist Left Conservative, with the Brahmin patrician conscientious objector, Robert Lowell, or the ex-Trotskyite *Esquire* commentator, Dwight Macdonald, or any of those who have left high school, universities, newspaper offices, cocktail parties, night clubs, to take part in the March? For it is apparent to him that his own attitudes are shared by very few of them, just as he shares very few of theirs. Paul Goodman's perhaps, he reflects sourly, for after all Goodman is a sexologue like himself; but then, Goodman believes in sex without sin, and his prose is so unpardonable! Even on a protest march, Robert Lowell has the air of chatting quietly to Harvard Deans in a university procession; no Deans, thinks Mailer, ever talked to Mailer like that, at Harvard or elsewhere. What kind of relation could there be between such a march, with its avowed object of seeking the passive martyrdom of arrest, and that violent revolution in the American psyche which Mailer has preached in so many different forms? What kind of revolutionaries can be made out of men like himself and Lowell whose chief concern before their arrest is whether they may be released in time to catch a plane back to the dinner parties which await them in New York that evening?

Thus Mailer meditates as he advances on the Pentagon, aware of the absurdity of his position, but with a growing awareness that it may prove to be serious. He turns a camera eye on the stream of his own consciousness, on its flotsam and jetsam, its turbulent eddies, its sudden clear pools and its deep underlying currents, while at the same time he records, with a vision which is both magnifying and microscopic, the objective happenings of the March. It is as if we watched two television screens at the same time, of which one showed what was happening inside Mailer and the other what was happening outside; and all the time Mailer searches for some unifying principle, some point of view of feeling, that will bring the two into a single focus. Technically, it is a feat of astonishing virtuosity, yet saved from mere virtuosity by the deep power of feeling which animates it. At one moment, Mailer has a chilling apprehension that many of his fellow marchers, the "liberal technologues," the academic humanists, are in fact set on the same route as those against whom they are protesting, and that their dreams of peace, if realised, would be no less soul-destroying than the Pentagon's dreams of war, and finds himself remembering, on the fresh fall morning of the March, the strange exhilaration of first going into action and wishing that there was something of this feeling of a *frisch und fröhliches Krieg* in their own shambling stroll to the Pentagon.

As we accompany him, we realise that something strange is happening to Mailer. At the end of it all, he has come to accept that what in fact unites him with his fellow marchers, beneath his and their personal animosities, resentments, grievances, social and intellectual snobberies, is at bottom no more than a certain shared residuum of honour and decency which has made them respond to an intolerable situation with the human instincts of love, compassion and truth. This is rather a comedown for the Mailer who would have liked to be the guerrilla chief of American psychical insurrection. So frail a bond does not make for political effectiveness and Mailer somewhat glumly reflects that the March, rather than offering any serious obstacle to the continuation of the war, may entail nothing more than the obligation to accept greater

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personal sacrifices than a few days in jail; though Mailer, who has been in jail before, is not inclined to underestimate the cost even of this. Sacrifice, he feels, grudgingly, unwillingly and with a sudden surprising access of modesty and humility, may be unavoidable, and this acceptance of the idea of sacrifice, which does not come easily to a man of Mailer's belligerent temperament, marks, one may think, a notable stage in the pilgrim's progress of his life.

FOR BY THE END it has become clear that what has happened to Mailer during his three days in Washington is possibly important, certainly to him. There was something both pitiful and abject in the appalling personal exhibition he made of himself when he first arrived in Washington, on the stage of the Ambassador theatre, mug of Bourbon in one hand, mouthing ribaldries and obscenities in phoney Irish and Southern accents, maudlin, drunk and incoherent, and no one could describe it more pitilessly, though with a kind of wild and Gargantuan humour, than Mailer himself does here.

But there was nothing pitiful or abject about the short speech he made on his release from jail, though its closing sentences will not endear him to liberal technologues; it is almost impossible to believe that one man was responsible for both performances. "Some of us were at the Pentagon yesterday, and we were arrested in order to make our symbolic protest of the war in Viet Nam, and most of us served these very short sentences, but they are a harbinger of what will come next, for if the war doesn't end next year, why then a few of us will probably have to take longer sentences. Because we must. You see, dear fellow Americans, it is Sunday, and we are burning the body and blood of Christ in Viet Nam. Yes, we are burning him there, and as we do, we destroy the foundation of this Republic, which is its love and trust in Christ."

For Mailer the March on the Pentagon was both a symbolic and an historic event; his magnificent account of it is, he says, "a discovery to himself of what the March on the Pentagon had finally meant, and what had been won, and what had been lost in that quintessentially American and most contemporary event—the scheduled happening which begins with the given and ends on the road to that mystery where courage, death and the dream of love give promise of sleep."

What is most remarkable, however, in his article is that out of his own subjective reactions to the March, he creates a brilliant picture of the turmoil, the profound diversions and confusions, the conflicts and contradictions of the American scene today. He makes one think of Whitman:

> *Do I contradict myself?*
> *Very well then, I contradict myself.*
> *(I am large, I contain multitudes).*

And because whatever Mailer feels he feels violently, he somehow succeeds also in conveying a sense of the terrible strength of the conflicts in the heart of America today. It is as if he himself were being torn apart by the forces which are tearing America apart.

R

To My Mother

Like an old windmill
Two hands always raised
To howl at the sky
And two lowered
To make sandwiches.

Her eyes are clean and glitter
Like the Passover eve.

At night she will put
All the letters
And the photographs
Side by side,

So she can measure
The length of God's finger.

I want to walk in the deep
Wadis between her sobs
I want to stand in the terrible heat
Of her silence.

I want to lean on the
Rough trunks
Of her pain.

She laid me,
As Hagar laid Ishmael
Under one of the bushes.

So that she won't have to be at my death
In the war,
Under one of the bushes
In one of the wars.

Yehuda Amichai
Translated by Assia Gutman

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Douglas Oliver

Jain sequence

I

Illustrations

The boat spat out by the harbour
on the map
splits off from England
Thomas Maurice
(A History of Hindoostan)
captain
breath of India
our sails lean on an engraved slipstream
I am crew
a second-rate geographer
steers us into fiction

impossible to sail
like Roussel's mother
who called for a telescope—
"So that is India
captain
we are returning to France"
on my seas
an artist combs the waves
at every landing
imaginary countries retreat from me
natives race back into the woods
no return home either.

II

A treacherous foreigner lands

Soul atrophied
frees me from destinies
like this bull in Calcutta *streets*
hitches pants
over bony hips
disconsolate rustler
run him out to where the sun goes down.

The street full of saris
parakeet colours
women in vivid green Indian blue
men in slum shirts
baggy trousers who
all could be beggars
half the population
lying down alongside bicycles in the shadows
indolence of low-caste
nobody pats the bull
as they do cows
evil gouts
burst out of a tuft below his stomach
thoughts of a sacred cow to shag.

to brighten him up
I could whisper a western religion into his ears
parable of the slaughterhouse.

III

The temples

Gandhi's text
alive: ahimsā
hurt no one
they should print it on
vegetable curry packets.
Ahimsā for Jains meant
not to hurt insects in your path
to strain
drinking water.

The last of the Jains' 24 perfect lords
left footmarks fossils
at Pava-Puri
he wouldn't tread on any living thing.

Our very religious Indian coalman
gives me a handshake. I set him
dancing among temples
where the stones are fried-egg hot
polished statues of the perfect ones
couch their toes in Jaina perfection
non-workers.

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IV

The lion

Skin-white radiant princess
allotted 14
prophetic dreams
this night you'll learn
your child is a saint.
He'd have loved you
yet such memories
will void
careless of that red
engine-room the last rebirth.
His life suffers in you but
he'll forget
he'll have to forget
things he's fond of
forever fasting
the sky-clad discarder of clothes
and through austerities
win an arid liberation
the hand fades
on the knee the
body withering
the dust
with all that's left fingernails hair
unvanquished remnants of perfection
—o, and his footprints.

The prophecies begin now as the room spins
you see the white skins of lordly animals.

Trumpeting dream-thunder
echoes in the mind-clouds
a great male tusker
white as flourbags
trots away from you when he goes
still you hear him valorous.

The evening dulls
it lightens with the bull
cruel face hacked out in lard
but he's brave
yoked with religion
sturdy stroll to the sunset.

Pounce from the sky
fistfuls of ivory knives
and the yellowy lion lands quiet
slaver drops pearls
he could be proud as a pomaded duke
will not be proud only an unheeding lord.
This shall be your son's symbol
Lion of the Jaina.

Knowledge of his qualities comes home to you

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skies full of emblematic bric-à-brac
in the 14th dream the single
fire
its flame-colour of clarified butter
shoots to the firmament
white-souled child irradiates the universe.

V

The Foreigner's Conversion

"Of what use is the barren cow which gives no milk?
Of what use is the king's grace
if he does not fulfil the hope of suppliants?
From an ungrateful king no help in trouble
his frugal court a hole full of snakes
no one would willingly enter."

Every rebirth, Mother, your Jaina sons
and the non-Jaina
awake in the same fortified city
never allowed to know it well.
If at any time we
try ourselves out as ideal kings
walking on the battlements
the city's under siege.
Some of our brethren
up there now
staring out at what is viewless
but threatens.
When one of the false kings falls
we don't know why or if an enemy
plunders his ornate body in the moat
presumably our great gates open
and citadelians
rescue the corpse.
A day or two later
we recognise the fallen man in the street
he's a bit dazed reduced to his working clothes.

All the time the real king Karma
fat as a tent squats in the citadel
approving our obsequies
he forces more gold on us
guardians of his unwanted treasure.

VI

Flight from the siege

Snakes move in the sun
bacilli in the lens
we are all beginning to move
starlings scatter from the washpoles

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mallets hammer out the tent pegs
demons inhabit the billowing walls
the auspicious
arrow
enters the raven like a fork
the camp is ready to fold and take wing
one among us
casts no shadow.

The district commissioner
sanctions preparations with a nod
haversack straps get last-minute stitches
nerves fires wither
Indian cooks
snakes glide
from forest pools
latrines topple into the water.

Some kind of baggage column is forming up
very incomplete a shattered backbone
here's the rest of our party.

The sun slips ahead of us to twelve o'clock
in this old landscape a new one comes into
focus
and we can't remember how we came to be
marching.

A hundred yards away the king
casts no shadow
is bolt upright on his elephant
an arrow would reach him
he would fall like lightning

still on the move
one or two of my neighbours string their bows.

VII

Pyres of the ideal kings

Smoke crawls from my bedlinen
smoke grows through the jungle
out of vegetation semi-transparent
hunchback greys
run into the clear day of sleep.
Figures that are nothing in sunlight.
born in this jungle
where every path hacked through with knives
aids the assassins.

Tarpaulin
bodies
of elephants steam in rivers
shellac near
the bankside
roots the drowned mosquitoes
no movement breeds in the carcase-mud
no escape
down-river to the pyres.

Smoke hides in chimneys of the earth
whorls of blackened grass
gramophones
I hear music
as fumes
discolour the sunny clearings
camouflage maneaters
muzzles stir
linen-wrapped bodies
under burning trees.

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Poet's House

By Muriel Spark

I THINK most writers have started their literary careers at a very early age. They've discovered at school that they can write good essays or poems, even if they're no good at anything else. But many and many people who've shown an aptitude for writing even in their teens stop writing when they grow up and find themselves occupied with something else.

But I've always been interested in what makes the adult writer start to write. Is it something compulsive within the person? Or is it, perhaps, some outward combination of circumstances? Because it's one thing to feel quite certain within oneself that one has the ability to write and to be full of ideas and visions, but it's quite another thing actually to get down to it. I think the getting down to it is the most difficult part. Even now, after years of practice, I always have the greatest difficulty in lifting up a pen and sitting down to write. I can always think of other things to do which look more attractive at the time. But I always do get down to it in the end. It's a sort of obsession. And once I've started to write, everything becomes easy, everything else is forgotten, and the hours I spend writing my novels or stories are perhaps the happiest hours of my life.

But now I've been asked what it was that made me get down to writing in the first place, and actually put pen to paper and see what I could do. It was a curious adventure that I had in the summer of 1944.

Before that I'd been in Central Africa for some years, and couldn't get home because of the outbreak of war. Africa was full of astonishing and marvellous things, but I had felt very strongly the lack of communication with the world to which I belonged. There was no advanced cultural life in Africa by which to measure all I experienced there—because I had even then a satirical cast of mind. So I'd longed throughout the early years of the war to get back to a place of books and ideas even although the bombs were falling. Above all I was passionately fond of poetry; I'd managed to read the modern poets in *Penguin New Writing* and felt they were tremendously exciting.

It was early in 1944 that I managed to get a passage home, and like everyone else I was immediately sent to a war job. This was with the Foreign Office in the country, but whenever I got leave to come up to London I made straight for the bookshops. Very soon I'd read all the poets of the 'thirties and early 'forties. You must understand that these writers seemed like giants to me at that time; remote, almost unreal people bearing glamorous names—Auden, Spender, Day Lewis, MacNeice. These are poets whom I now read with a more or less critical enjoyment. But at this time I thought them superbly beyond criticism because of the new doors they seemed to be opening everywhere.

ONE DAY IN THE SUMMER of 1944 I was returning from a visit to Edinburgh by train. Those wartime trains were terribly crowded. I sat next to a girl who told me she was working in London as a mother's help at a house in St. John's Wood. She was very good company, and we whiled away the long hours talking about our lives before the war, which was always good common talking-ground in those days. If you travelled long distances by train during the war, you'll probably remember how the trains used to stop at some big station like Crewe or York, or at some large junction, and seem to forget to go on. Sometimes a train would simply wait at a place for four or five hours at a time. One supposed this was due to troop movements or air raids. This was the time of the *V-1* bombs—robots that buzzed across the London skies, then shut off their engines, hovered for a moment and fell like a

MURIEL SPARK *writes: "Some years ago I was asked to talk about how I became a writer.* The Poet's House *describes an actual experience in 1944, when, during the bombing, I took refuge for a night in a house that turned out to belong to a well-known poet who was absent at the time with his wife and family. It was a small enough incident, but the experience was important to me. I used it first in 1952, as a starting-point for a short story,* The House of the Famous Poet, *which I put aside until last year, when it was published.*

"But when I wrote the present piece for broadcasting I did not let my imagination elaborate on the actual event. I left some things out, partly to save myself embarrassment. I left out the name of the poet whose house I had made so free with, as it were. It was the late Louis MacNeice. I am sure he would not have been embarrassed by the story, for his part, but rather amused. . . ."

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thunderbolt. Our train had stopped at one station for about three hours, and we watched the comings and goings of soldiers, and families laden with shabby bags and children on the platform; there was a sort of dingy poetry about the scene, and I wanted to be a writer and make it permanent. I remember especially a young private soldier standing on the platform drinking a large cup of railway tea, drinking it all up, then staring for a long time into the empty cup with no expression at all on his face.

We were about five hours late arriving in London. The sirens were wailing. It was a horrible sound, whoever thought it up. I was always more afraid of the sirens than of the bombs. I'd missed my last train back to the country and I was undecided where to spend the night, because I was quite poor. The girl I'd met on the train asked me to come and spend the night with her at St. John's Wood. "It's all right," she said, "because *they're* away just now." She meant the master and mistress of the house. We got a taxi to St. John's Wood and on the way she told me their name, which didn't mean anything special to me just then.

THE HOUSE had a small front garden, which I remember in the waning summer light as a mass of tangled greenery, rather neglected. My friend opened the front door and we entered a darkish room almost wholly taken up with a long, plain wood work-table. On this was a half-empty marmalade jar, a pile of papers and a dried-up ink bottle. I remember there was a steel Morrison shelter in one corner and some photographs on the mantelpiece, one of a schoolboy wearing glasses. We opened our bags to get out our little packets of food rations and I asked her about the owner of the house. She said he was something in a university.

The room in which I was to sleep was a large light room on the first floor, partly a study, with several windows. I noticed it was far more orderly than the rest of the house. The bed was merely a fairly thick mattress neatly made up on the floor. I thought the owner of the study was probably an elderly cranky professor. Then of course I looked at the books. I can't remember many of the titles, but I saw that it was an enterprising sort of library, not at all consistent with the idea of an old scholar. But in fact I think I was rather irritated by the unconventional quality of the whole house, and now of these books, because I couldn't see any meaning for it. Eccentricity for its own sake always seems to me a very boring thing, but it ceases to be merely eccentricity when it's the expression of a new and living system of thought.

I took down one or two books. An inscription in one of them was signed by its author, a well-known novelist. I found another inscribed copy, and this was dedicated on the fly-leaf to a famous poet, one of those whose work I'd been reading again and again. I recalled the name of the owner of the house which my friend, the nurse-maid, had told me in the taxi. She was having a bath at that moment. I shouted to her through the bathroom door, "Is this the house of the famous poet?" Through her splashes, in a bored sort of way, she said, "Yes, he writes poetry."

I DON'T WANT to exaggerate the importance in itself of this incident; to most people I think it would have been interesting and perhaps amusing to find themselves lodged in the house of a well-known writer. But on me at that particular point in my life it had an intense imaginative effect. I had no wish to meet or see the poet; on the contrary I began to be afraid that the family would return suddenly from wherever they were, and I asked my friend very urgently to assure me there was no chance of them coming back. Now it was the house itself which fascinated me.

I went round it touching everything. I sat at the poet's desk. I lifted the pencils and smelt them. I wanted to draw the virtue out of everything and make it my own. In the attic I found a pile of shabby books. These were mostly novels and volumes of 19th-century poets, the sort of books that might once have been prescribed school reading. But I didn't bother much about the titles, I was intent on touching the books. I think I must have felt that by some sympathetic magic I could draw from the poet's possessions some essence which would enable me to get down to my writing. Perhaps I ought to say here that I haven't been particularly influenced in my work by this poet. It was merely the will to write that I wanted to acquire.

During that night the sirens went frequently and one heard the thud of the *V-1*'s near or far. I didn't take shelter, I didn't see any need to on that occasion. I felt it was impossible that the poet's house could be hit by a bomb.

Next morning early I went outside and stood exactly where I'd been when I first saw the garden from the door of the taxi. I wanted to get my first impressions for a second time. And this time I saw an absolute purpose in everything both outside and inside the house. I was intensely curious, and greatly impressed now by the unconventional quality of the house.

At this particular moment my life could have taken several courses. Everyone was thinking of what they were going to do after the war.

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A number of lively prospects involving whole new ways of life were opening before me at that moment. But suddenly in the poet's house they all seemed unattractive beside the possibility of becoming a writer. One never knows if any particular decision is a right or a wrong one. But whatever its value, I came to this determination, and I was filled with a feeling of freedom and complete dedication which has never left me. And so this poet's house in which I found myself by chance became for me a symbol of what I was to attempt to make of my life. Perhaps if I'd foreseen the difficulties I wouldn't have had the courage to choose this particular vocation. But at that time I felt so confident that I could become a writer that before I left for the country I lifted the poet's telephone and rang up a literary agent. I enquired if they would like my new book. So far I hadn't written any book, but still I said, would they like to have it? I added that I was speaking from the house of the poet, whose name I didn't hesitate to mention. Possibly on the strength of this the literary agent said, yes, yes, they would like to see the book. I promised to send it the following week.

Of course it was some years before I wrote anything like a book and before I even discovered what kind of writing I could do best. But that evening when I was back in the country I started writing a poem. It was a terrible poem. But I made two copies of it and sent it to two magazines at once. Amazingly—because it really was a frightful poem—both magazines accepted it, which put me into a most encouraging dilemma. And I felt I was really set up in my literary career.

Since that time I've been in the houses of many poets and writers, though not as a trespasser. There's always something special and something simple about a writer's house. I've never met a really good writer who lives in high style. I think a stylish life is unsuitable to the writer, and very often in the house where there's a mild disorder one finds the writer with the best powers of organising his work. Order where order is due.

A Catarrh of Economists?

From Keynes to Postan — By Harry G. Johnson

In his article "A Plague of Economists?" [Encounter, January], Professor Michael Postan has charged British economists with partial responsibility for the country's problems. He has criticised them for their emphasis on macro-economic analysis and "systemic" policy prescriptions, and for their preoccupation with the statistical classifications of industry into primary, secondary and tertiary. Max Beloff [Encounter, March] has strengthened the indictment by making clear what Professor Postan left decently obscure, that the Cambridge economists adulated at the beginning of his article are the very persons responsible for the stupidities of theory and policy exposed at the end of it. Beloff is entitled to the undisturbed enjoyment of his prejudices; but Postan has attempted to present a reasoned case, which calls for some comment. Specifically, the question arises whether his criticisms of economists reflect shortcomings of contemporary economic science itself, or shortcomings of the subject as practised by the British economists Professor Postan has had most opportunity to observe, or some failure on Professor Postan's part to understand the nature and limitations of economic science.

To take the last possibility first, economics as a social science has to be concerned with aggregates and averages—the behaviour of the system in the mass. This is partly a matter of the nature of social science, and partly a matter of sheer cost (more elegantly, of economics). To predict how the totality of British industry is likely to react to a devaluation, for a concrete example, is a problem that washes out the vagaries of individual firm or industry behaviour, and permits reliance on the social science principle that on the average the economy will respond to general changes according to some general statistical law of response. To try to predict how each individual firm or industry will react, as

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Professor Postan expects of the profession in his article in the January ENCOUNTER, would be, first of all, an exercise involving tremendous cost, far beyond what the government would be willing to spend on it or the country's limited professional cadres could deliver in such a short space of time. Second, it would be an exercise of extreme difficulty, since what each industry will do could only be predicted on the basis of a whole set of assumptions about how what happened in the aggregate would affect the decisions of the individual industry under examination. And thirdly, it would be an exercise of extremely doubtful value, since both government and economists want to know not the effect of devaluation on individual firms and industries, but the overall effect on the balance of payments, which would have to be estimated by aggregating the individual firm or industry estimates, using individual estimates derived from a consistent set of assumptions. (It is, of course, possible that partial disaggregation of the economy into major sectors for the purpose of estimation would improve the reliability of the resulting overall estimate, and this is common practice in the more elaborate estimating exercises; but such exercises remain highly aggregative, for the reasons given.)

What Professor Postan fails to realise is that the strength of economic science lies precisely in its conception of the economy as a system, in which the individual elements are bound together by general relationships of a nature statistically reliable in the aggregate. To ask the economist to predict the behaviour of the individual unit in the system, and even more demandingly to recommend policies to alter that behaviour to something more satisfactory, is to ask him to predict and prescribe something that he is not required by his science to do. One might as well argue that a life assurance company is improperly managed if it cannot predict the precise day and hour at which each one of its policy-holders will die, and does not attempt to furnish each with a personal survival-maximisation programme. Life assurance companies rely, instead, on actuarial science to cope with the problems of mortality in the aggregate, and have made a reasonable profit while furnishing a reasonable service to their clientele by so doing. Few on either side of the business would opt for a Postanian style of individual service.

IN PLACE OF the macro-economic approach, *which not only conforms with the principle of* scientific and economic efficiency but has certain politically more fundamental advantages of consistency with at least a modest pretence to the preservation of personal freedom and liberty of choice, Professor Postan upholds the superiority of an approach that regards the real problems as "local" and requiring specific rather than "systemic" remedies. In so doing he begs not only the questions of the economic cost and the social desirability of persuasive paternalism, but more fundamentally the question of how to identify these "local" problems. His own off-hand examples give little ground for confidence in his recommended approach, and much ground for fearing that he really believes in priestly magic rather than science (or, to put it less provocatively, than the application of trained intelligence to the solution of problems). Most of his specific argument involves nothing more profound than the observation that the performance of some units or sectors of the economy falls short of the average, and the recommendation that steps should be taken to bring them up to the average. It is of the essence of an average that some of the population from which it is derived must be below it; but this is no argument for the application of benevolent Procrusteanism to that part. On the contrary, the deviations from the average generally have an economic explanation, and if specific policies are to be adopted it would seem at least as plausible to recommend encouraging the above-average performers and penalising the below-average ones. At the basis of Professor Postan's argument—and of much contemporary British economic policy—is the naïve public-school-cum-socialist belief that in economics as elsewhere everyone ought to do equally well, and that if they do not they should be levelled up at public expense. Underlying that belief, again, is a picture of the economy as being composed by nature of a set of industries or firms that ought all to grow at the same rate regardless of changing relative cost conditions domestically and in relation to the rest of the world—a picture at least as fallacious as the statistical classification of industries into primary, secondary, and tertiary that Professor Postan blames for the naïveté of many economists on the subject of economic development processes and policy. (Actually, very few professional economists nowadays regard that classification as useful for understanding development. In choosing it as a target for his major criticism, Professor Postan is flogging a dying horse.)

TURNING to the question of how far the aspects of the performance of British economists that Professor Postan legitimately criticises should be attributed to special characteristics of the profession as practised in this country, it is important to recognise certain economic, politi-

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cal, and cultural characteristics of it—and especially of its domination by Oxbridge—that encourage the arrogance, the emphasis on macro-economics, and the propensity to tackle micro-economic problems (especially those involving social and cultural institutions) in terms of brilliant over-simplifications.

To begin with, the dominance of the Civil Service mentality in establishing the principles of payment by seniority for University staff, and automatic inferiority of university salaries to comparable civil service salaries, eliminates any real economic incentive for the Oxbridge economist to work hard to improve himself as a social scientist. The effective incentives are the non-economic ones of intellectual challenge and pride of workmanship. These are not invariably robust. The economic incentives are to divert as quickly as possible to administration, either within Oxbridge or by retirement to a provincial chair. But one must preserve a ceremonially adequate appearance of competence in the subject, and this is most easily accomplished by maintaining a sporting interest in the major issues of macro-economic policy.

Second, the main academic responsibility of the Oxbridge economist is the training by close personal contact of bright undergraduates destined for the ruling élite. Success in this activity, which is extremely time-consuming, is most easily achieved by the display of brilliance in stereotyping the structure of the economy and the nature of its problems. There is also a temptation to produce clever solutions to those problems whose non-acceptance heretofore can be attributed directly or by implication to the ignorance of one's students' elders.

Third, the Oxbridge role of training the country's élite tends to generate both a respect for political power, and a hungering after the opportunity to exercise it derived from the knowledge that one is wiser than one's students. The result is that academic economists are only too easily bought, either as public and ostensibly impartial defenders of party and government policies or as expert advisers to and servants of government, willing to allow their reputations to sanction policies adopted contrary to their advice or to the prescriptions of their science in return for the opportunity to exercise some residual influence in some areas of policy-making. That residual influence, in turn, is frequently exercised, not by demonstrating superior competence in problem analysis, but by demonstrating superior ability to invent politically appealing economic policy gimmicks.

IT IS, IN FACT, a great mistake, though a common one, to assume that governmental economic policy is really made in accordance with, or even much influenced by, the best that economic science has to offer. Instead, the government economist is more frequently a barrister making the best case for his client's behaviour that he can, or an advertising copy-writer, plugging the most seductive characteristics of the product he has contracted to sell. This is true not only in England, but in the contemporary homeland of scientific (as contrasted with forensic) economics, the United States. The difference is that in the United States a pluralistic university system based on competition in academic excellence (which is rewarded by competitive salaries) provides incentives for economists to base their careers on scientific accomplishment rather than political usefulness, to challenge forensic nonsense on scientific grounds rather than accept and repeat it out of a sense of responsibility to and personal participation in the power structure, and to relate themselves to government for the most part as scientifically qualified expert consultants rather than as employees or general policy advisers. This difference is exemplified by the fact that, though from the autumn of 1964 on more and more economists came to regard devaluation as a prerequisite to solution of the country's problems, this was revealed to the public only after devaluation actually was forced on the government. Meanwhile the economists who were free to speak devoted most of their policy efforts to preaching the virtues of an incomes policy which it was hoped—on the basis of no evidence whatsoever—would avoid the necessity of a devaluation. In the United States, by contrast, there has always been, since the balance of payments deficit became a serious problem, a vocal group of academic advocates of devaluation or a floating exchange rate and the demonetisation of gold, and opponents of incomes policy and balance-of-payments controls. As another example (involving other social sciences as well as economics), the government was allowed to bring the latest application to join the Common Market up to the denouement of another French veto without any expert questioning in public of the assumption that if Britain merely demonstrated the will to join, the Common Market countries would welcome her entry. It was only well after the commitment to this course had become irrevocable, also, that any serious question was raised about the economic cost to Britain of Common Market membership.

FINALLY, there is the most fundamental question Professor Postan has raised, the contemporary preoccupation of British econo-

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mics, and to a somewhat lesser extent of economics elsewhere, with the macro-economic approach introduced by John Maynard Keynes. Without espousing the particular alternative approach proposed by Professor Postan, which is anti-scientific and pro-judgmental in the extreme, one can accept his view that the Keynesian approach is partly responsible for the defective performance of economists in helping to solve the world's economic problems.

The counter-productive effects of the Keynesian revolution fall under two heads. One is the assumption that the economic problems of society are so simple and so obvious that any intelligent person can hope by sheer ratiocination to lay the foundations for a great leap forward in the country's economic performance. As it happens, a deep depression in a normally prosperous economy is one of the few circumstances in which society is obviously wasting resources through obviously remediable stupidity, and in which the habits of thinking of the prosperity phase stand in the way of clear thinking about remedies for the failure to maintain prosperity. Even so, it is doubtful whether the Keynesian revolution would have caught on so fast if British economists had really understood and kept in the front of their minds the economic consequences of the return to an overvalued exchange rate in 1925. Keynes had outlined the case so brilliantly in "The Economic Consequences of Mr. Churchill"—but he then forgot it, under the understandable social pressures on the economist, especially the British economist, to see the country's economic problems as the political process sees them and not as they really are from the standpoint of pure economic theory.

But much worse, especially for English economics, was the fact that while Keynes came to *The General Theory* after a lifetime of fairly intensive study of monetary theory and phenomena, the way in which he presented the theory as an attack on economic orthodoxy, and especially his appeal to the young people of Cambridge to join him in dismissing orthodoxy as senile nonsense, established the myth that youthful irreverence towards and challenge to the wisdom and understanding accumulated by past scholarly work is all that is required to establish superior competence in economic science. This attitude is the foundation both of the preference for gimmickry that has made English economics such a poor guide to economic policy-making, and for the decline of the English profession as a source of productive new ideas for the world's economists to work on. A preference for paradox and a disinclination to undertake hard intellectual and empirical work are a guarantee of declining professional respect in an outside world decreasingly concerned with the politics of personal success in a moribund society and increasingly concerned with the discovery of effective tools of scientific exploration and resolution of real problems.

THE MORE IMPORTANT counter-productive consequence of the Keynesian revolution—because it has strongly conditioned scientific work outside the United Kingdom—was its concentration on the short-run problems of an economy whose structure is assumed to be given, and its jettisoning not only of micro-economics but of the broad insights into the process of economic development that the classical tradition of economic theorising had produced. Here Professor Postan is on his strongest ground (though he does not develop its full strength). Keynesian economics has implanted deeply into the basic approach of the contemporary economist the belief that the economy can and should be manipulated by governmental control of demand, including both control of its aggregate level, and control of the division of total demand between current consumption and investment for the future. This belief has not only blinkered the eyes of economists concerned with development planning, as both Professor Postan and Max Beloff have derisively pointed out. It has misled both British and American economists and the economists of other countries into the belief that demand expansion (or this plus investment incentives) is the key to rapid growth. This belief has inhibited economists from investigating the extent to which macro- and micro-economic policies concerned with other objectives than the control of aggregate demand and investment have been inimical to growth—such policies as tariff protection, the pricing practices of nationalised industries, progressive income taxation, regional economic development, and so forth. It has also prevented others from stretching their minds to comprehend the influence of social and cultural institutions on the efficiency and potential growth of the economy and the kinds of non-economic policies that might be useful in solving the country's problems. In particular, it has occurred to very few economists indeed to question whether it is growth-productive to maintain a society in which entrepreneurs rank third in the decision-taking hierarchy after governments and their economic consultants and planners, or to examine whether cognate social scientists on the one hand, and management and similar consultant experts on the other, have more to say than the economist about what kinds of changes in existing social and institutional arrangements are capable of increasing productivity.

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THESE PROBLEMS ARE, however, problems which are being forced on the attention of those economists who are genuinely concerned with solving the questions posed by the human situation to economics as a social science, and who are dissatisfied with answers that do not make scientific sense. In the course of time, one hopes that economists equipped with this scientific spirit of social enquiry will replace those who have been trading on the Keynesian revolution for essentially political purposes, and that the profession (especially in this country) will come to be valued for its problem-solving ability rather than for its political and forensic function. Many of the less publicly-well-known economists in Britain are already professionals in this sense, including some who can be found in Oxbridge itself. If they come to dominate the profession as a whole, Professor Postan will be justified in regarding the recent contributions of the profession to distracting public attention from the country's real problems as a catarrh rather than a plague.

There is, however, a serious danger that the national habit of under-rewarding serious and competent work, and over-rewarding brilliance in divining simple pseudo-solutions to complex problems, will stimulate the "brain-drain" of the competent and the consolidation of the positions of the clever and the pedestrian, who for contrasting reasons unite in over-rating the value of the bright idea. Unfortunately, Messrs. Postan and Beloff have in their separate ways encouraged this outcome by failing to realise what the real issues in the profession of economics currently are, and by using the pages of ENCOUNTER to condemn economists indiscriminately.

A Plague of Politicians?

READING Professor M. M. Postan's article ["A Plague of Economists?," ENCOUNTER, January] reminded me of that Renoir film in which the house-party sallies forth on Sunday morning and shoots every bird and rabbit for miles around. Bang! bang! bang! goes Professor Postan, and down they crash. Aggregates, economists, Corporation Tax, existing statistical classifications, macro-economics, industrialisation in developing countries, S.E.T.—before long the landscape is littered with their corpses.

But closer inspection of this scene of indiscriminate slaughter raises doubts. Are the victims of Professor Postan's marksmanship really dead? Are they, indeed, even wounded? Or are they just lying doggo, preparing to play on Professor Postan the sort of trick that current events sometimes play on even the most distinguished historians?

The biggest of his targets—the macro-economic advice of Government economists—I strongly suspect to be very much alive (indeed I should have thought it invulnerable to the sort of ammunition Professor Postan has been using) and I shall examine it more closely in a moment. But first there are one or two other apparent corpses that deserve a brief glance before over-hasty interment.

I would agree with Professor Postan that *some* micro-economic intervention by the Central Government is required—that senior officials and economic advisers (and in some cases Ministers themselves) must sometimes concern themselves with individual firms or groups of people. The inefficiency of much of British industry is not going to be eradicated if *all* that the Government does is to use aggregative measures—quite sophisticated though these now are. One thing that is often needed, for example, is the merging of two or more firms, and often this will not happen unless a few heads are banged together and perhaps some special grant or loan made available to finance "teething problems." Though this kind of activity would normally be conducted by some body established for the purpose (hence the setting up of the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation) one can see that some cases may arise where the terms offered, or the effect of the merger on employment or prices or the balance of payments, may need to be considered by top economic advisers.

Professor Postan, however, argues not that there may be occasional cases where this kind of micro-economic intervention may be useful, but that there should be far more of it, and indeed that this is virtually the only thing that economic advisers should be doing. It seems rather churlish of Professor Postan to pick the present time to argue this. Over the last four or five years the weight attached to this kind of detailed economic intervention has increased to an enormous extent. Under the Conservative Government there was the setting-up of NEDDY and the first of the little NEDDIES. Since the Labour Government took office—under a Prime Minister far more interested in detailed intervention in the economy than any of his pre-

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decessors—there has been a whole host of measures designed to further the aims so close to Professor Postan's heart. There has been the establishment of the D.E.A. (stuffed with Industrial Advisers), the Ministry of Technology, the Prices and Incomes Board, a lot more little NEDDIES, the I.R.C. and various other bodies to do the same sort of job in individual industries, organisations to promote exports and save imports, and interventionist devices of many other kinds. There has also been a vast amount of time and thought devoted by senior economic advisers in the central economic departments to a whole series of tiny ways of increasing exports, or saving imports, or creating a bit of employment here or there.

Undoubtedly important though much of this kind of activity is, Professor Postan's reasons for wanting more and more of it (instead of accepting that what is needed are the appropriate *general* measures) seem to me to be condemned by his own examples. British exports are not uncompetitive with German exports "as a whole," he says; this is true only of certain "strategically situated industries, such as shipping or electrical appliances." But how does he explain the fact that over the past decade British exports *as a whole* have grown less than half as fast as German exports? And what is a "strategically situated industry"? An odd concept, surely, to emanate from one so quick to criticise meaningless economic classifications. And even if there were such a thing, why does Professor Postan think ours do badly while the Germans' do well? And even granted satisfactory answers to all these questions, what specific and detailed steps are economic advisers supposed to take to put things right? Professor Postan talks vaguely of failures in "management, design, salesmanship, or the behaviour of groups of labour," but although we may all agree that a lot of British management is pretty second-rate, and that it is a pity that workers ask for large wage increases and occasionally go on unofficial strike, it is difficult to see what specific action can be taken on these fronts by economic advisers that is going to raise our exports of ships or electrical appliances within the foreseeable future.

PROFESSOR POSTAN'S ERROR lies, I think, in assuming that if some export prices are too high but others all right, a macro-economic measure that affects *all* export prices (such as an alteration of exchange rates or a successful incomes policy) cannot be appropriate. Similarly, to take another of his examples, if some overseas investment is in Britain's interests, then he feels that a measure (like the introduction of Corporation Tax) which makes *all* overseas investment less attractive must be misconceived. Of course it is true that any general economic measures must be aimed at the marginal units, and that the consequent gains to the intra-marginal units are in a sense unnecessary. But how can one shift the marginal units (and it is this which makes all the difference between success and failure for economic policy as a whole) without changing the rewards of the intra-marginal units? If there is a shortage of nurses, for example, because nurses are underpaid by the standards of other professions, it is neither equitable nor administratively feasible to pay existing nurses the same, but new recruits more.

In the case of exports, it is true that all that has been needed during the past decade has been a marginal increase—had they been 10 per cent or even 5 per cent higher than they were, there would have been no balance-of-payments crises, no deflation, no stagnation. Unfortunately, endless attempts to secure this marginal shift by means of the specific administrative measures called for by Professor Postan failed totally to secure it; and, in the end, even the politicians accepted that a *general* measure (devaluation) was needed. And although this means that firms which were competitive in export markets before will benefit as well as those which were not, this should not be taken too tragically. These firms will now be able to make substantially higher profits in export markets than they could before, and Professor Postan may even find that they switch their best designers and salesmen to exports.

THIS BRINGS ME to what seems the fundamental fallacy which Professor Postan perpetrates. His main theme, summarised in a sentence, is that the British economy has got into a frightful mess because economic advisers, instead of making themselves useful by providing advice on a host of detailed, practical, specific issues, have been wasting their time thinking about macro-economic variables—the rate of growth, the level of employment, total investment, the balance of payments deficit, etc., and attempting to get these things right by what he calls "Keynesian remedies."

One might note in passing that these remedies are not quite as general or non-discriminating as Professor Postan seems to assume. Changes in income tax affect the consumption of particular goods differently from changes in purchase tax; changes in investment grants affect the pattern and timing of investment differently from changes in interest rates; changes in expenditure by the Ministry of Housing will have very different effects on the industrial pattern of production, the regional distribution of unemployment, and even the balance of payments, from changes in expenditure by the

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Ministry of Social Security. And so on. The point is that modern Keynesian policies can be used to achieve a very wide range of effects, and these effects are carefully calculated and vigorously argued about in the economic departments —not nearly enough, perhaps, but probably a lot more than Professor Postan imagines.

However, Professor Postan's real trouble is simply that he has got things upside down. The economy has not got into a mess because there has been too little micro-economic intervention by economists. It has got into a mess because the economists' advice on *macro-economics* has not been listened to. If the correct Keynesian macro-economic remedies had been applied to the economy in recent years, the economy would not be in a mess. But they were not applied; and they were not applied because they did not suit the politicians. The evidence Professor Postan detected of top-level economic advisers taking an increasing interest in detailed micro-aspects of industrial policy was not a matter for congratulation: it was a measure of their despair.

The main reason I find Professor Postan's argument so unconvincing—indeed unreal—is that he has completely ignored the role of the balance of payments in the formulation of economic policy over the last three or four years: a classic case of Hamlet without the Prince. It does not seem to me possible to understand economic policy since 1963 or 1964 without accepting three simple facts.[1]

1. After years of thoroughly bad balance of payments performances (the last respectable surplus had been in 1958), 1964 saw a huge (indeed by historical standards almost unbelievable) deficit of nearly £800 million. The deficit was reduced in 1965 and again in 1966; but even in the latter year it was still nearly 200 million. The combined deficit for the three years 1964-1966 was some £1,300 million—substantially larger than the country's entire stock of gold and dollar reserves at the beginning of 1964.

[1] Professor Postan was writing before devaluation, but all these facts were known to most people before devaluation; if they were not known to Professor Postan one can only reflect on the pitfalls which await historians who rush into print before the history has finished happening.

2. By October 1964 many of the economists pilloried by Professor Postan were convinced that the balance of payments problem could not be solved except by devaluation. By July 1966 this opinion must have been virtually unanimous.

3. Until late in 1967 the politicians utterly rejected devaluation as a solution. The Conservative Government (according to Mr. Reginald Maudling) never even contemplated it. The new Labour Government considered it in October 1964 and rejected it—on political grounds. For the next three years it was simply ruled out as a possible course of action—ruled out by politicians, on political grounds.

The consequence of this decision (if the Government was to be able to borrow enough to avoid being *forced* to devalue) was deflation: stagnant production, falling investment, rising unemployment—all the ills that Professor Postan imagines to be evidence of the failure of Keynesian remedies. On the contrary: they were the result of a failure to apply Keynesian remedies.

It is the privilege of politicians to reject expert advice, however technical the subject (and in the last resort the correct exchange rate is a technical matter) and however unanimous the experts. But if, as a result, things go badly wrong, it is hardly fair to blame the experts. Since 1963 or 1964, the basic Keynesian remedy that the British economy has needed has been devaluation. No amount of micro-economic tinkering ever looked like being a substitute for this. Of course it is not *sufficient* to get the macro-economic stuff right—one needs a good deal of detailed intervention as well. But if one gets the macro-economics wrong, one has had it. It is a mistake to believe that if one spends enough time cleaning the sparking plugs it may cease to matter that the petrol tank is empty.

Devaluation, and the associated measures needed to make it work (mainly macro-economic measures) should change all this. It is only a thousand pities that this essential step was not taken three or four years ago, and that so much time has been wasted, so much production lost.

A plague of economists? Come, come, Professor Postan, be fair. Surely what you mean is, a plague on politicians.

Michael Stewart

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The Senator & World Power

Letter from America — By HENRY FAIRLIE

SENATOR FULBRIGHT is an old-fashioned politician. That is not necessarily a mark against him, but it is important to grasp what kind of political animal he is. He is, for example, a Southerner and, most obviously, this fact dictates his votes in the Senate on important domestic issues. It was not a "hawk," wishing to make an easy point against him, who asked recently:

> And what is so high-minded about Senator Fulbright—who has consistently voted *against* civil rights, minimum wages, medical care, etc.—when he now declares that we must divert Viet Nam war-spending to help the Negroes and our cities?

The question was asked by one of the more insistent radical voices in America—Tom Kahn, in *Dissent* (September-October 1967).

When Senator Fulbright says, in *The Arrogance of Power*,[1] "Vigorously executed and adequately funded, the legislation adopted by the 89th Congress can open the way to an era of abundance and opportunity for all Americans," it is pertinent to point out (whatever he and his defenders may reply) that the legislation was adopted without the assistance of his vote and that, in so far as progress has been made towards its vigorous execution and adequate funding, it has again been without his support. In the 89th Congress, Senator Fulbright voted against the liberal position on: (*1*) police interrogations, a matter of acute interest to Negroes; (*2*) reapportionment, the vital step needed to establish the principle of "one man, one vote" in the state legislatures; (*3*) demonstration cities, the President's modest but promising programme of aid to sixty or seventy cities over a period of two years; (*4*) a minimum wage, even though the proposed figure would "barely provide a poverty level of living today"; and (*5*) a closure on the debate on the 1966 Civil Rights Bill, which was the only chance of saving it. Since he represents the South, it may be conceded that Senator Fulbright's position is awkward. But Senator Yarborough (of Texas) also represents a Southern State; and, on four out of five of the issues mentioned above, he voted on the liberal side, and himself introduced one of them.

Moreover, if the absence of Senator Fulbright's vote hardly mattered in the 89th Congress, when a single voice or vote could make little difference, it has mattered in the 90th Congress—the "negative ninetieth"—when the revival of the old coalition between Republicans and Dixiecrats has demanded that liberal Southern Democrats should pull more than their weight in trying to carry President Johnson's domestic legislation. But, again, at every crucial moment, Senator Fulbright's voice has been silent, and his vote absent, as before. He and his defenders will dismiss this as old hat; but what it reveals is of real significance. Whereas Senator Yarborough, in Texas, has tried to put together a coalition of interests and voters which makes some sense in modern times, Senator Fulbright has never made any such attempt during his long years in the two Houses of Congress. His political position in Arkansas may be difficult—thus justifying his conservative votes in the Senate—but he has made no effort to change it. He has been content to ride on the old politics of the old interests of the South.

But the economical and judicious disposal which Senator Fulbright makes of his conscience is the least important of his Southern attitudes. He makes a lot, in the course of his current argument, of the "fatal impact" which Western (now American) intervention has had on the native societies of Asia and Africa and Latin America. Perhaps, he says, they do not want "our" forms of freedom; perhaps they are not suited to "our" forms of democracy; perhaps they should be left alone, without our interference, except in the most discreet forms. This is neither more nor less than the historic voice of the Southerner when he talks of the Negroes. Why disturb them with ideas of freedom and democracy? Why let outside intervention agitate them and disrupt their world? They are quite happy as they are. It is the same accent as Senator Fulbright's when he complains that Europeans in the past and Americans now "have shattered traditional societies, disrupted

[1] London, Cape; New York, Random House.

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fragile economies, and undermined peoples' self-confidence . . . by giving good advice, by intruding on people who have not wanted them, but could not resist them."

SENATOR FULBRIGHT TAKES his text from Alan Moorehead's *The Fatal Impact*, a readable but perhaps inadequate historical source. There is another more acute authority. In *The End of Empire*, John Strachey adopted Marx's thesis of the "destructive and regenerative" impact of Western countries on the native societies they ruled. Marx was "at pains to emphasise that, even on its destructive side, the British conquest of India had performed a function, however brutally, which had somehow to be performed." It might be sickening, Marx conceded, to witness thousands of "patriarchal and inoffensive organisations" being dissolved and disorganised, their members losing their ancient and traditional forms of civilisation. But

> we must not forget that these idyllic village communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstitition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies.

The passage is built up with the sledge-hammer eloquence which Marx could bring to political argument. He implores us not to forget "the barbarian egoism . . . concentrated in some miserable patch of land," or the "stagnatory, undignified and vegetative life" which that egoism and that miserable patch of land supported. England might have been "actuated by the vilest interests," but

> this is not the question. The question is can mankind fulfil its destiny—without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England, she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution. . . . The work of regeneration hardly transpires through a heap of ruins. Nevertheless it has begun.

Strachey, while accepting Marx's "destructive and regenerative" thesis, went on to point out that, just as Marx had exaggerated the destructive side of British rule, so he had exaggerated its regenerative side. "The real criticism which must be made of the British record in India is that it did not effectively break up the stagnation of Asian society." We can hardly deny it today.

It is surely a little late in the day to have to point out that the main impact which the West has had, and is having, on Asia and Africa and Latin America is the result, not of governmental decisions or even military intervention, but of Western technology, of the "destructive and regenerative" effects which it unconsciously has on native societies, and the "destructive and regenerative" ideas which more or less consciously accompany it.

The process, as Marx said, is agonising. But, although one may understand Senator Fulbright's well-bred distaste for the cruder evidence of Western civilisation in traditional societies; although one would like to believe with him that Saigon was a decent society before the West (and the Americans, in particular; and American soldiers, in particular) prostituted it; although one would like to take all the good that anthropologists tell us existed or exists in native societies, and forget about all the bad—a time comes to call a halt to such reveries, as Macaulay did when he savaged Southey's picture of the pastoral life which he imagined had existed in England before the Industrial Revolution.

Margaret Mead was once describing the life of a South Seas tribe on television. "But isn't their life much better than ours?" interrupted her clever interviewer. "Yes," she answered, "I suppose their life is good. But it is limited." In that "limited"—as in Marx's remark about restraining the human mind within the smallest possible compass—lies all that those who fear the impact of the West on the undeveloped world would deny to its still oppressed millions, and all that the South has always wished to deny to the Negro. We have got into the habit in recent years—and Senator Fulbright is a most obvious example—of talking of the impact of the West on the rest of the world as if Marx and Hobson and Lenin had never written. They did their sums wrong—as often as not, did the wrong sums—but they at least understood something of what the business of the last two centuries has been. Whereas, before the 18th century, a number of civilisations still existed in different parts of the world, isolated from and unchallenged by each other, the leap which Western technology then took changed the situation for ever. For the first time in history, one civilisation was in a position to intrude on and then to dominate every other. Anyone who believes that the main impact of that civilisation has been anything other than to release the minds of millions from the thrall of centuries is indulging in reverie.

WE ARE OBVIOUSLY at the end of the first "destructive" phase of the process in the undeveloped world. The "regenerative" effects for which Marx looked have begun to work, and Communism will no doubt be seen, in the perspective of history, as one brutal form

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by which the West worked its influence on the undeveloped world. It is only a little over twenty years since it became clear that this "regeneration" has begun: that, after the "destruction" wrought by the West on native societies, these societies were awakening to their opportunities and about to produce their own movements and leaders to direct the "regeneration." But, during this crucial stage of the confrontation, the West cannot be passive, even if it wishes to be. Its technology is still the dominant influence in the world; and neither this technology nor the ideas which accompany it can help doing what Senator Fulbright bemoans. They must, inevitably, have the effect of shattering traditional societies and disrupting fragile economies. As technology banishes scarcity, it loosens the ties which bind traditional societies; and the West cannot simply say: "Here is our technology, but none of the ideas, none of the forms, none of the revolutionary influences, which accompany it."

Arkansas is not a very forward, or forward-looking, state; and they still talk there of the "fatal impact" which the industrial North has had on the traditional society of the South. Senator Fulbright himself regards the Civil War as having been, if not unjust, "at least unnecessary." By such standards, almost any war might be shown to be unnecessary: and, of course, it is Lincoln's acceptance of the necessary which makes him, for most of us, one of the undeniably great men of history.[2] But the real significance of Senator Fulbright's voice today is that it is seductive, not only to the Americans who are confused by their lonely responsibilities, but to the rest of the West which seems to have grown weary of its role: one might say, almost exactly, world-weary. More and more, during the past two years, Senator Fulbright's attitude to the undeveloped world has had (I think, not accidentally) echoes of another contemporary attitude: "Tune in. Turn on. Drop out."

All this may seem far from the actual choices which are available in Viet Nam. But Senator Fulbright, in his public pronouncements, becomes less and less concerned with actual choices. (This is the most obvious difference between *The Arrogance of Power*, 1967, and *Old Myths and New Realities*, 1964.) It is no longer clear, as Senator Dirksen discovered when he challenged him on the Senate floor, exactly what he thinks the United States should *do* in Viet Nam. He is a little clearer about what the United States should *not do*, but any of us, in answer to that question, could draw up our own list. What is quite certain is that those who believe America should withdraw immediately from South Viet Nam have no right to quote Senator Fulbright on their side. He does not believe that, and he has never said it. As far as one can gather from his public statements, he still believes in some kind of "enclave" policy in South Viet Nam: whatever else this means, it certainly means a long-term and costly American presence in South-east Asia.

But Senator Fulbright's public concern now is not with policy, but with attitudes. His argument, if made to cohere, goes something like this:

> 1. War is nasty, and has psychological origins which we do not yet understand;
> 2. The United States is very powerful, and therefore has a special responsibility to adjust its policies to the psychology of other nations;
> 3. It has a special responsibility to understand the psychology of today's revolutions;
> 4. These responsibilities are heightened because of its own particular history, the unique example which it was intended to set to the world;
> 5. These heightened responsibilities, to itself and to the world, mean that it should avoid the temptations to which other great powers have fallen victim;
> 6. These temptations may conveniently be summarised as the arrogance of power.

It is a nice and simple message—until one begins to try and find out what Senator Fulbright means by it. It then has a way of evaporating.

Senator Fulbright first turned his and our minds to the causes of war in *Old Myths*. He there said, quite confidently, "It is in the minds of men, after all, that wars are spawned," and went on:

> In our search for answers to the complex questions of war and peace, we come ultimately to the paradox of man himself.... The paradoxes of human nature are eternal and perhaps unanswerable, but I do think we know enough about elemental human needs to be able to apply certain psychological principles in our efforts to alleviate the tensions of cold war.

It is good homely stuff; and later he repeated that, "We must recognise, first of all, that the ultimate source of war and peace lies in human nature." Two pages later, however, he turns completely round and quotes (with approval)

[2] Rex Warner, in *The Young Cæsar*, has a penetrating passage on moral "necessity" in statesmanship. He makes Julius Cæsar say: "for recognising some necessities, and for acting with the speed and confidence required to ensure that out of two or more possibilities one in particular becomes an event, I shall deserve the respect of posterity. It would be true to call me necessary...."

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the opinion of "a group of eight distinguished psychologists and social scientists," who stated:

> To the best of our knowledge, there is no evidence to indicate that wars are necessary and inevitable consequences of "human nature." ...

Why, then, Senator Fulbright is left asking, "if conflict and war are not indigenous to our nature, are they so prevalent?" He flies for rescue to another "social psychologist," Gordon Allport, who says:

> The crux of the matter lies in the fact that, while most people deplore war, they nonetheless expect it to continue. And what people expect determines their behaviour....

If only, all these years, one had known.

Senator Fulbright returns to the subject now in *Arrogance* where he quotes a rather unhelpful reflection by Aldous Huxley that "Organised slaughter is the result of arguments about such questions as the following: Which is the best nation? The best religion? The best political theory? ... Why do they resist our beneficent efforts to bring them under our control and make them like ourselves?" It is not one of Aldous Huxley's more original or penetrating contemplations. But Senator Fulbright seems satisfied with it, and to accept the fact that wars are fought over such abstractions.

Again, however, he doubles back on his tracks. He immediately dismisses these abstractions—"the defence or perpetuation of great principles"—as causes of war, and says instead that they have been and are only "explanations or excuses for certain unfathomable drives of human nature." He then repeats that he does not know what these unfathomable drives, the root causes of war, are, and concludes: "For lack of a clear and precise understanding of exactly what these motives are, I refer to them as the 'arrogance of power.'" So he introduces his phrase, with the clearest admission that it rescues him from the uncomfortable fact that he does not know—and we cannot know—what he is talking about. Politicians should stick to their last.

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[3] The case of Poland in 1939 is particularly relevant to the problem of America's commitments today. When Neville Chamberlain made his firm commitment to resist a German attack on Poland, no one thought that the defence of Poland was what he was mainly concerned about, since such a defence was not possible. He was saying that an invasion of Poland would be the occasion for Britain to honour a much more general commitment, not least to her own interests, in Europe. An American commitment to defend a particular country in South-east Asia can be regarded sensibly only in the same way.

THE ONLY WARS whose causes he attempts to examine are the Franco-German war of 1870; the Spanish-American war of 1898; the European war of 1914 (as far as one can tell, he approves of America's entry in 1917); and the Korean war of 1950. None of his interpretations of the causes of these conflicts seems adequate—here and there he is grossly distorting—and his main point, that wars are seldom fought for the reasons which national leaders give at the time, is hardly novel or to the point. That wars are not fought for the reasons given—the Allies obviously did not go to war to defend Poland in 1939[3]—does not prove that they are therefore unnecessary or unjust.

There are, however, two serious objections to Senator Fulbright's discussion of the question. First, he does not consider what particular statesmen could have done to prevent the outbreak of the wars. He gives, for example, a blithe account of the mutual suspicion with which the nations of Europe regarded each other before 1914, but he does not consider that, if Grey had pursued a different foreign policy, making Britain's attitude clear, he might have prevented the lights from going out all over Europe. As far as I am concerned, it was Grey who helped to turn them out, by failing to follow an openly assertive policy, and leaving the character of the British commitment in Europe open to question and misinterpretation.

Secondly, and this is of fundamental importance to the rest of his argument, Senator Fulbright talks as if wars were conducted between peoples. This enables him to make the unjustified leap from the belief that the Russians or the Chinese are much like us, or the North Vietnamese much like the South Vietnamese, to the mystified inquiry why they should then go to war with each other. But wars are conducted, not between peoples, but between states; and they are conducted by those who hold power in individual states, whether one identifies them as classes or individuals. They appear to conduct them in what they believe to be the interests of the national state which they control; and if Senator Fulbright had been seriously interested in the causes of war, he would have inquired into the nature of the sovereign state, and its conception of its interests, instead of calling psychologists and sociologists to talk about "human nature."

SENATOR FULBRIGHT goes a little wild about the psychology of other nations. In one remarkable passage, he says that America should use the same methods in dealing with China as are used in "dealing with paranoid individuals"; and it was not, again,

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a "hawk," but Alex Campbell in the *New Republic* whose radical bias (especially on Viet Nam) can hardly be questioned, who commented that the Chinese might regard even this as an example of American arrogance. But it is only Senator Fulbright's arrogance; and the whole section on "Human Nature and International Relations" (*Arrogance*, Ch. 8) is stiff with condescension towards the nations (or peoples, as he would have it) who need to be treated—he actually uses the phrase—"as persons with 'nervous breakdowns.'"

Senator Fulbright delivered the lecture on which this section is based, at Johns Hopkins University, after he had paraded before his Senate Foreign Relations Committee a solemn band of psychologists and sociologists and even social psychologists, and another solemn band of China historians, to educate him and (he would have us believe) the American people. The results are now there to see, in his own book, as he asks us seriously to consider experiments on eleven-year-old boys divided into "Eagles" and "Rattlers." If a President of the United States talked in this manner, the new Amendment to the Constitution, which provides for the replacement of an incapable Chief Executive, would come into operation.

Senator Fulbright was not really bitten by psychology until 1965 and 1966, but even in *Old Myths* there were indications of the way in which he was going. "Would there not," he asked, "be significant psychological symbolism in the Soviet Union sharing responsibility for the construction and maintenance" of the Panama Canal? I would have thought that the most likely symbolism the Soviet Union would see would be an invitation to her to regard the Western Hemisphere as a legitimate sphere of influence, which is precisely what John F. Kennedy denied in 1962, and what Senator Fulbright was prepared to deny (by his own account) even to the point of invading Cuba. But even this is not the main point. It is proving hard enough for Panama and America to reach a new agreement about the Canal Zone which will satisfy their respective public opinions. The idea of bedevilling the whole issue by inviting the extraneous assistance of the Soviet Union, and by making it one of great-power or cold-war politics, raises serious doubts about Senator Fulbright's ability to distinguish the essentials in any international problem.

Senator Fulbright's curious ideas about the psychology of nations will no doubt, one day, receive the full treatment they deserve. But it is necessary to notice here that some of the same attitudes underlie what he has to say about con-

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temporary revolutions and the desirable American response to them.[4] His ideas about revolution appear to have been taken from his reading (one has to assume it is his reading, although there are many people in Washington who are a little surprised to find that he has ranged so widely through Samuel Butler and Aldous Huxley and Jean de la Bruyère and Ruth Benedict and Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson) of Crane Brinton. From Professor Brinton's own rather simple interpretations, Senator Fulbright has taken the simplest of the lot: that revolutions—naturally? inevitably?—move from a moderate beginning, through an extreme and violent middle stage, to a new and lasting moderation. Revolutions, he says rather grandly, more than once, move to their Thermidor, and then the world can start dealing with them, and co-existing with them. Of course, nothing of the sort happened in the French Revolution. The coup of 9th Thermidor was followed by risings on 12th Germinal and 1st Prairial, which the "moderates" suppressed by appealing, not even to the national guard, but to the army. From there, it was a downhill slope, past 18th Fructidor, when Napoleon's lieutenants quashed elections in 49 departments, to 18th Brumaire.

Thermidor, my foot! Did the Roman Revolution ever reach a Thermidor? Was Julius Cæsar its Thermidor—or Augustus? Did the Nazi Revolution ever reach a Thermidor—would it ever have done? Has General Franco brought Spain to its Thermidor—is his successor likely to do so? Is the Russian Revolution—as Senator Fulbright would have us believe—really in its Thermidor—and can we really placidly wait for China (if we help it over its nervous breakdown) to reach its Thermidor? The phrase and the concept are, of course, meaningless: and, in so far as they can be given any meaning, point to the opposite of what Senator Fulbright would have us believe—to the fact that moderates find it difficult to control revolutions, even in the long run.

What the rest of the world is interested in is the generally expansionist urge of revolutions. They are expansionist, partly because they usually set up some group (*e.g.*, church or class) as having claims beyond national boundaries, partly because they are proselytising by nature, and partly because expansion abroad is a useful domestic distraction. Senator Fulbright appears to argue that revolutions will lose their expansionist urge merely with the passing of time. There is not the slightest evidence that this is likely to happen. They lose the urge as a result of resistance and failure—in this they are no different from other nation-states—and not to draw a limit to their expansion is merely to invite them to indulge it further. Moreover, if this is true of their outward expansion, it is equally true of their internal oppression. If revolutions eventually have to bow to their peoples' yearning for freedom, it is at least in part because other nations have not merely kept the idea of freedom alive, but advertised it and defended it.

THE IDEA of the uniqueness of the American experience is an old and complicated one, but it emerges in the current utterances of Senator Fulbright and those who think like him in its simplest, and most strident, form. "What are our obligations in the exercise of the great power we possess?" Mr. Walter Lippmann asked:

> The oldest and first American answer to the question is in the Declaration of Independence, that power may be used only with a "decent respect to the opinions of mankind." This is the original American commitment, not to use force without taking into account the opinions of others. This fundamental commitment against the use of force in human affairs has been, in the American view, the prime obligation of power. This has been the American idea from the beginning. (17 May 1966)

As Senator Fulbright has escalated his argument, he confides to us more and more often that he has had the same revelation. In his address to the American Bar Association in Honolulu this year, he said:

> The question [is] . . . whether it is possible for us Americans with our particular history and national character, to combine morally incompatible roles.
>
> Our youth are showing that they still believe in the American dream.
>
> They [the dissenters] do not accept the view that, because other great nations have pursued power for its own sake—a pursuit which inevitably has ended in decline or disaster—America must do the same.

However obvious it may be, an outsider feels bound to say that the proclaimed original innocence of America is so much hocus-pocus. No sooner had America become an independent nation than it embarked on a course of imperial expansion which was not to stop until it had subdued and occupied a vast sub-continent, raped its land and, relentlessly following an already long tradition of implacable hostility to the Indian, without consistent parallel in the

[4] *I have tried to avoid repeating what I said about Senator Fulbright's theories in The Reporter (New York, 16 June 1966). This article should be taken in association with that and any unavoidable repetition understood and forgiven.*

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Spanish Empire, finished the job by obliterating the five civilised Indian nations, as they were even then called.

It is impossible for an outsider to accept Senator Fulbright's depiction of America's *particular history and national character*, when he recalls that Arkansas was brought into the Union as the result of one of the most chilling of all imperial exploits in history, the Louisiana purchase; that, as soon as Arkansas became a territory in 1819, its legislature made it clear that it was little disposed to recognise Indian land titles; that the Indians were at last persuaded to leave Arkansas as the result of an earnest (but empty) federal promise that their new location would be a permanent home; that, in 1836, "a stumbling procession of more than fifteen thousand Creek stretched from border to border across Arkansas, shepherded by wolves and vultures"; and that, when the first Cherokee reached their destination beyond the western border of Arkansas, it was after four thousand of them had died, either in the stockades or on the journey west.

It is quite a record. But, whenever one makes such a point to an American friend, he will always answer: "But that is dirty pool." One's liberal friends in America, especially, like to represent every expansionist urge which the Americans have followed in their now considerable history of conquest as exceptional to the true, or original, character and history of the United States. But the events show the opposite. Once freed from the staying hand of the metropolitan government in London, the newly independent Americans (including some of the more demure of the Founding Fathers) took to expansion with ease, self-righteousness, and ruthlessness; and were able to continue it throughout the nineteenth century, at small cost and with an apparent lack of force, only because British sea power provided the umbrella under which territorial aggression and expansion could be pursued. No one, in fact, has more concisely set out the meaning to America of this "informal"—but concealed—"alliance with British sea power" than Mr. Lippmann in his (still instructive, if sometimes surprising) description of American policy, real and ideal, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (1943).

THE OBVIOUS RETORT, which I have consistently met in America, is that, although the continental expansion of America may be conceded to have been both aggressive and imperialistic, it is still different from overseas expansion and adventure; and that these have not generally been a part of America's *particular history*. Here is where an accurate reading of history is of fundamental importance. The really startling

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phase of European imperialism was after 1883, when America was certainly strong enough and wealthy enough to participate in the partitioning of the "unoccupied" world. She had the ships, she had the men, she had the money, too. That she participated only marginally and fitfully is frequently put forward as proof that the Americans are not, in the old-world sense, an imperialist people. But, today, the generally accepted interpretation of the frantic partitioning of the world after 1883 is that it was not imperialist in its motive.[5] This interpretation "sees the answer in new diplomatic patterns within Europe, and pinpoints Bismarck's claim for German colonies in 1884–5 as the genesis of a new situation. Bismarck treated colonies as undifferentiated diplomatic pawns. . . . Most colonies served no demonstrable imperial purpose."

The partitioning of the world was the result of a particular situation which existed in Europe, largely created by Bismarck; and, if America had been a part of the diplomatic pattern in Europe between 1883 and 1914, it would have found itself, like every other great power, taking part, with little obvious choice in the matter. In short, the fact that America did not become a great imperial power after 1883 was the result of its isolation from European politics, artificially maintained by the protection of British sea power: the result, not of its *particular history* but of a chance of history, not of its *national character* but of the character of its temporary situation, not of an *American idea at the beginning* but of an American conviction of security at the moment.

To say that Senator Fulbright and those who think like him are "neo-isolationists" is far from the truth, and I expect to live long enough to hear him call for American intervention and steadiness in some part of the world. To say that he and they encourage the growth of a neo-isolation is a little nearer the truth, but not near enough to be a worthy comment. What is dangerous in the thesis of Senator Fulbright and Mr. Lippmann is that they are reviving the idea of America as a unique power, in unique circumstances, with a unique history, when that uniqueness depended simply on the fact of British sea power. It is, after all, hardly news that the Monroe Doctrine meant something only because it was supported by the "concealed alliance with British sea power." In his very first sentence in *Arrogance*, Senator Fulbright revives the myth: "America is the most fortunate of nations—fortunate in her rich territory, *fortunate in having had a century of relative peace in which to develop that territory. . . .*" If she wishes to enjoy something like that same good fortune again (as Britain herself did in the nineteenth century), she has no alternative but to accept the same kind of world-wide responsibilities as were undertaken by the British Navy for about a quarter of a millennium.

SENATOR FULBRIGHT'S view of the rise and fall of empires and civilisations in the past is simple. They have accumulated their greatness by expansion; they have then destroyed themselves by expanding too far. This is the only sense that can be made out of his strange historical analogies: for example, "It was approximately under this kind of infatuation—an exaggerated sense of power and an imaginary sense of mission—that the Athenians attacked Syracuse and Napoleon and then Hitler invaded Russia." It should be noticed—it is not merely a debating point; it is essential to the whole of Senator Fulbright's thesis—that he does not object to the expansion of Athens *before* the Syracuse adventure, or of Napoleon and Hitler *before* they attempted to conquer Russia. He thus puts himself in a position, not only to say, "thus far and no farther" to the United States, but to say also, "thus far, with our acquiescence," to Russia and China. It is not conquest and expansion, as such, to which he objects, but conquest and expansion which over-reach themselves.

This could be the basis for a serious and strenuous thesis: very much the argument which he appeared to be developing in *Old Myths*. It could be the basis for a serious attempt to discover where the inescapable national interest of the United States lies: very much the attempt which Mr. Lippmann has always made, until recent years. But both Senator Fulbright and Mr. Lippmann have escalated their argument on to a moral plane, where it is impossible to meet them in realistic debate.

Mr. Lippmann's, especially, is a voice to which, over the years, one has learned to attend, although he is not the first thoughtful observer of human affairs who, in old age, has had to confront the fact that during his years on earth man has not outgrown his madness, and that he will just have to go on, generation after generation, making small and untidy arrangements to try and control it. But old age has its own impatience; it no longer has the energy to consider the complexity of the thousand-and-one awful details by which man just manages to keep himself alive and sane. Mr. Lippmann's elegiac and passionate denunciations of American policy today are too moving

[5] See, for example, D. K. Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires* (1967), Ch. 10. (New York, Delacorte Press; London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.)

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to ignore. But, as guides to policy, they have a limited relevance.

This is not the place to argue with Senator Fulbright's historical theories in detail. All one can say is that great powers in the past have neither risen nor fallen just from an ill-considered desire for conquest and expansion. Even Thucydides, whose *History* is dramatically divided at the point at which he thinks Athens lost Pericles and its wisdom together, and began to over-reach itself, makes it clear how complex the motives and the choices were. But most curious of all is that Senator Fulbright does not consider the history of the greatest (in extent and in duration) empire which the world knows today. From the fifteenth century, when Ivan III threw off the Tartar yoke, and embarked on a career of conquest which tripled the size of what was to become Russia, until the end of the Great Northern War by which Peter the Great at last established Russia for ever in the North, there was no doubt what the ambition of the Russian Tsars was: to create an impregnable nation-state. Were they driven only by the desire for aggrandisement? Or were they driven by a wholly realistic understanding of how—and alone how—Russia could be made safe? Every time Russia has been attacked and invaded, we have been given the answer: this conglomerate empire has held together, taken the strain, and survived. The earliest Tsars did their job well, and so have their successors.

Every urge which drove the Tsars drives the social-chauvinists (as Lenin might well have called them) who are Russia's rulers today: above all, to create a nation-state of unassailable endurance. Its space is an asset; its huge frontiers are a liability. Along a vast stretch of its southern border lies what Ortega y Gasset called "the great Islamic *magma*," from which he predicted the world would one day experience a shock. We have felt the first tremors. Does anyone believe that the national leaders of All Russia, sitting in Moscow, aware of their own Islamic population in the south, do not have the historical sense to understand what a united Islam might mean? Does anyone think they are just meddling in the Middle East?

ORTEGA, in the 1930s, was in fact predicting that Europe would have to unite, and he appears to have believed that its union would include Russia; and the occasion, he said, might be anything—"a Chinese pigtail appearing behind the Urals, or a shock from the great Islamic *magma*." Mr. Harold Macmillan once said to me that the greatest event in his lifetime was that Russia had finally "opted to be a Western power." An American observer, the other day,

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said that the most important fact of the second half of the twentieth century would prove to be that "Russia is white." They are all much the same observation; and Senator Fulbright is draining all meaning from history when he refuses to contemplate the immensity and complexity of the ideas and the effort which have maintained Russia as a permanent influence in the world since Ivan III set off on his improbable course. It is exactly in the same manner that he also ignores the historical fact of imperial China, and is able to dismiss it, as it responds to age-old impulses, as a country suffering a "nervous breakdown," which we should treat as we would treat a paranoid. Has Senator Fulbright any knowledge of Chinese history? Does he know what of Chinese philosophy is in Maoism (far more than in Chiang Kai-shek, who was precisely what Hazlitt called the "modern and mechanical" man)? Has he read any Chinese poetry? And, if he has, how can he say that they are a paranoid people, or could be made so by something as temporary as the impact of the West? Whatever impact any external influence may have on China, it will never be fatal, and the consequence will never be paranoia.

Senator Fulbright could have done an invaluable job, if he had remained true to the accent of *Old Myths and New Realities*, if he had tried to educate the American people into an understanding of what the power of their *continental* empire—America and Russia and China are all continental empires, unlike the sea-going empires of the 17-to-19th centuries—means. Instead, he has decided to ignore, and to invite his countrymen to ignore, the world-wide vulnerability of the American continent now that British sea-power is no longer a protection.

AS I HAVE POINTED out already, Senator Fulbright introduces the phrase, "the arrogance of power," with the admission that it is a substitute for knowing what he is talking about. It is only necessary to say here that fear of power is itself a form of arrogance: a belief that men or nations can absolve themselves from the responsibilities which power imposes, without seriously harming themselves, other men, and other nations. I do not wish to get into a profitless discussion about the use of the words, "empire" and "imperial"; but the best justification that I have seen of them was given by Mr. Irving Kristol in *Foreign Affairs* (July 1967). "A great power is 'imperial' because what it does *not* do is just as significant, and just as consequential, as what it does. Which is to say, a great power does not have the range of freedom of action—derived from freedom of inaction—that a small power possesses." It is the situation in which America, like Russia, finds itself today.

Talleyrand, when asked what non-intervention meant, said: *"C'est un mot métaphysique, et politique, qui signifie à près le même chôse —qu'intervention."* Senator Fulbright has driven himself, and is trying to drive the American people, into a position where neither he nor they can recognise that "non-intervention" by a power as great as the United States is as positive an act of intervention as what usually goes by the name. His arrogance—precisely the arrogance of power—is the belief that great power confers freedom of action. A great power can only hope (as Rex Warner makes Caesar say) that posterity will recognise that its actions were "necessary and, where possible, well-meaning." Empire—or, if Senator Fulbright objects to the word, great power—is a task to which the present will never be forgiving, and which will be honoured only in the future when the thankless business is done.

I must add a final postscript, precisely because it is now considered old-fashioned to say such things. I have a belief, of which I cannot rid myself, that the Western tradition contains more understanding of what freedom is, a more strenuous will to maintain and extend it, more hope that it may one day be enjoyed by millions outside the West, than any other civilisation, either past or present. The West may be superior only in this, but it is ours, our tradition and our life, and I refuse to turn my back on it, and drop out. The survival of this tradition depends today on the power of America, and the exertion of that power. It will commit follies, and it will commit hapless crimes. But, while criticising and hoping to reduce the number of these, neither the Americans themselves nor the rest of the West have any right to condemn *facilely or maliciously* the exercise of power by the one nation which can preserve the Western idea of freedom for us and for the future. It is not "anti-Americanism" which is worrying—it is natural and healthy—but a form of anti-Americanism which sometimes suggests that the West itself has lost its will.

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Genet's Success Story

By Philip Thody

WHEN, in 1952, Jean-Paul Sartre published the first (and, still, the longest) book on Genet, *Saint Genet, comédien et martyr*, there was surprise and bewilderment on two counts: that he should have written so long an essay on an author who was still alive, and at the time only in his early forties; and that his book should concern someone whose works were barely known outside a fairly small *côterie*.

For although Genet's first novel, *Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs*, had been privately printed as early as 1942, and although all his major prose works had appeared before 1949, there could scarcely have been more than a few thousand people with a first-hand knowledge of his writing. Only the *Journal du Voleur* had been openly published in an unlimited edition, and his first two plays, *Haute Surveillance* (*Deathwatch*) and *Les Bonnes* (*The Maids*) had enjoyed only relatively short runs. In England, his prose works remained officially unobtainable until 1964, when Anthony Blond courageously published *Our Lady of the Flowers*; and even in France the free circulation of his work after 1952 inspired few critics to follow Sartre's example and actually study the content of the poetry and prose included in the *Œuvres Complètes*, and to which *Saint Genet* had, officially, served as a preface.

It was, in fact, only in the late 1950s and early '60s—with performances of *Le Balcon* (*The Balcony*) in London in 1957 and in Paris in 1960, and productions of *Les Nègres* (*The Blacks*) in Paris in 1959 and in London and New York in 1961—that Genet became, for the general public, more than what *Transition* once called "the last of the court poets," and began to receive the degree of serious comment and criticism due to a major writer. In 1963, Joseph McMahon published a competent but rather brief and uncontroversial account of his major works called *The Imagination of Jean Genet*; and in 1965 Claude Bonnefoy wrote an essay about him in a series entitled *Classiques du XXe siècle*. Then, in 1966—the year that the performances of *Les Paravents* (*The Screens*) at the Odéon-Théâtre de France had to receive police protection against a mob of furious ex-servicemen and die-hards of *Algérie Française*—France's most notorious ex-convict officially became one of Segher's *Poètes d'aujourd'hui* when Jean-Marie Magnan wrote an eulogy of him in that series. Neither Bonnefoy's nor Magnan's essay, however, went much further than the *haute vulgarisation* at which the French are so expert, or tried to explain what precise qualities in Genet's work made him a good writer. In fact, it is only with Richard Coe's *The Vision of Jean Genet*[1] that he has at last found a critic equally capable of understanding the originality of his work and of finding his way beyond its contradictions.

Although the accuracy as spiritual biography of Sartre's essay is borne out by Genet's own remark that, after reading it, he felt that he had been "stripped naked,"[2] *Saint Genet, comédien et martyr* is too obviously an attempt to use Genet as evidence for a series of essen-

[1] Peter Owen, 50s. With the exception of his third novel, *Pompes Funèbres*, all Genet's other major prose works, *Our Lady of the Flowers, Miracle of the Rose, Querelle of Brest* and *The Thief's Journal*, have been published in England by Anthony Blond and in the U.S.A. by Grove Press. *The Thief's Journal* is in the Penguin Modern Classics. All the plays—*Deathwatch, The Maids, The Balcony, The Blacks* and *The Screens*—have been published in Bernard Frechtman's translation by Faber and Faber in England and in America by Grove Press; Sartre's *Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr* (again in the late Bernard Frechtman's translation) by Grove Press in America and by W. H. Allen in England. Joseph McMahon's *The Imagination of Jean Genet* was published by Yale University Press in 1963.

[2] In the only long interview that Genet has ever given: *Playboy*, April 1964.

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tially Sartrian concepts about the wickedness of bourgeois society, the contradictions of saint-hood and the origins of morality to be satisfactory as literary criticism. It is at one and the same time both very much more and very much less, and however curious it may seem to place an English academic above one of the most celebrated writers of our age, there is no doubt that *The Vision of Jean Genet* offers a much sounder account of Genet's work than Sartre's essay. To begin with, it deals with more of Genet's works—*Saint Genet* makes only passing mention of *Deathwatch*, relegates *The Maids* to an appendix, and has not been revised to include *The Balcony, The Blacks,* or *The Screens* —and thus enables the reader to appreciate how many of the themes first adumbrated in the novels receive a more accessible and definitive expression in the plays. Neither does it assume that everyone has read Genet, or that his plays and prose works are so far above the ordinary run of literature as to be immune from criticism. On the other hand, it does not swing so far away from the existentialist context in which Genet is most immediately comprehensible as to try to present him from an alien viewpoint. Indeed, its excellence stems from the fact that Dr. Coe manages to combine an intuitive and essentially sympathetic approach to Genet with the awareness—apparently lacking in Jean-Marie Magnan and Claude Bonnefoy as well as in Sartre himself—that his work is not the be-all and end-all of modern literature.

Thus Dr. Coe rightly assumes, from the very outset, that the critic who approaches Genet from the outside, adopting the standpoint of what he calls "gentle rationalism" (or of a common-sense, liberal agnosticism), will find his work so riddled with intellectual inconsistencies that its literary value, with all the verbal felicities, will appear almost incidental and irrelevant to Genet's declared aims and main concerns. As the most superficial reading of his work makes clear, Genet is perpetually telling his readers that the criminals he pretends to admire, and whom he presents with a wealth of lyrical images, are in reality cowardly, selfish, stupid and ugly, and that the homosexual passion which he flaunts as his own is a source of repeated misery and frustration. The critic who studies Genet from his own rather than Genet's point of view, who analyses from a rational standpoint without giving himself the opportunity to sympathise from what Genet would call a "poetic" one, rarely gets beyond these apparent contradictions, and consequently tends to see Genet as exemplifying first and foremost the paradoxical and self-defeating situation of the man seeking both to achieve and extol evil in its chemically pure state. This is not Dr. Coe's method. Although he recognises that "every one of Genet's mythical heroes—a Harcamone, a Bulkaen, a Riton, Stilitano, an Armand—is, intellectually speaking, a monument of moronic imbecility," he sees this fact within the literary context which is alone relevant to a study of Genet's novels: that of a thorough-going subjectivism which enables Genet to recapture his past life and, by the use of his imaginative powers, replace it in a universe coherent for him. Genet created Riton and Stilitano as they are, "because he wanted them that way," and we must try to see why they are so moronic instead of simply regarding them as figures of fun. Genet is not trying either to describe things as they are or to persuade the reader to accept his ideas. He is creating his own autonomous world, in which there is a coherence for us to find, and it is therefore quite irrelevant to point to what are inconsistencies only from our standpoint and not from his.

This is not, of course, something which Dr. Coe makes explicit. He was clearly never tempted to approach Genet from the inappropriate common-sense angle. Nevertheless, it is implicit in his whole approach, for in his very first chapter, *All done with mirrors*, he emphasises by an analysis of Genet's recurrent images and themes how distant his work is from a realistic presentation of things as they are. Everything in his novels and plays is reflected and refracted through Genet's own mind as part and parcel of his poetic recreation of the world, and presented to the reader not as something purporting to be real in itself, but as the raw material on which the reader's own imagination may then set to work. "The classical novel," writes Dr. Coe, "in which the writer manipulated clear-cut, objective characters for the benefit of a passively observing reader, is, in a phenomenological context, a patent absurdity," and he appreciates Genet for having recognised this and wrestled with its implications "long before Robbe-Grillet and Robert Pinget, before Butor and even before Nathalie Sarraute." If we are to understand Genet's achievement we must, like good Bergsonians, espouse the current of his thought and accept the climate of his novels, temporarily suspending our traditional aesthetic and moral prejudices and modes of thought.

Genet has always claimed to be a poet and has often been acclaimed as one, but the nature of his vision has never before been fully explained. And, in spite of his insistence that his work is not an attempt at a biographical study, Dr. Coe also offers a more convincing account than

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Sartre of the events in Genet's life which relate the thief to the writer. For Sartre, it was because Genet, accused of petty thefts at the age of eight or nine, consciously chose to be a thief and assume his own wickedness as a deliberate choice, that he eventually became a writer of genius and was able to use literature to recreate the absolute evil which he had never achieved in life. Dr. Coe argues that it was only in retrospect that Genet interpreted as conscious choice what must have been a "scarcely formulable but violent emotional revolt in the child's mind." It was only later, as a direct result of his work as a writer, that he saw the significance of the way he behaved as a child. It is because Genet was reinterpreting his whole life in intellectualised terms that he presented himself as having been much more wicked than he probably was, and thus provided Sartre with a misleadingly clear textbook example for the same kind of existential psycho-analysis which he had already attempted in *Baudelaire* in 1947, and is now repeating in his essays on Flaubert.

Dr. Coe thus invites the reader to introduce an essential correction into Sartre's claim that Genet is "the thief who reinvented literature." Genet is the thief who used literature to reinvent (or rather to create) himself, attaining through the process of literary creation that active, virile mode of being which, because of his homosexuality, had always eluded him in real life. He does more than create a series of characters who depend for their existence on himself alone; by giving reality to what Dr. Coe calls "the Golden Legend of a professional burglar," he also recuperates his own life, transforming destiny into free choice by an act of retrospective creation, and thus becoming, in the sense that he really exists only in his books, the product of his own will.

This emphasis on the purely subjective nature of Genet's work leads to a number of problems which Dr. Coe either does not confront directly or which he finds difficulty in solving. Thus, within the framework of those forms of symbolist literature to which Genet certainly belongs, it is possible to conceive of a body of work whose first and only value lies in its total inner consistency; and for as long as Dr. Coe is analysing the coherence of Genet's mirror imagery or the patterns of descriptive images in his novels, his approach is both fruitful and convincing. The difficulty arises when he attempts to suggest, in less extreme terms than Sartre but from a roughly comparable standpoint, that Genet's work tells us, the bourgeois readers—the "right-thinking citizens, the critics and readers of the *Times Literary Supplement,*

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the house-holders and rate-payers"—something about ourselves and our world. Sartre not only claims that Genet's work forces the honest reader to acknowledge his own moral duplicity (and thus his resemblance under the skin with the criminals he despises) but also maintains that Genet's novels reflect the conflicts immanent in what he sees as the present transition from a culture based upon private property to one dominated by collectivism. Dr. Coe is more modest. He finally claims that what Genet really offers is little more than a fairly familiar anarchist challenge; and, by stressing the ease with which Genet would have fitted into the world of Aubrey Beardsley or Paul Adam, he also attaches him very amusingly and convincingly to "the last *arrière-garde* but two." Nevertheless, he still tries to have it both ways: Genet as a thorough-going solipsist and as a dramatist whose plays are relevant to the political and social problems of the present day. For this reason his discussion of Genet's theatre is less satisfying than his analysis of the novels.

Thus he states, in his chapter on *The Balcony*, that the essence of Genet's dilemma as a dramatist lies in the fact that, while he "refuses to create a socialist theatre," his negative revolt will inescapably "be interpreted as some sort of socialism." Because there is an unresolved conflict between Genet's anarchist revolt and the compulsion he feels to "produce some sort of positive hero in the strictest Zhdanovist tradition," this particular play is "rather muddled." Surely, this is only the case if one sets out from the assumption that Genet is never concerned with describing or reflecting reality, and that because what he expresses in his theatre is a purely individualistic revolt, he does not also give *some* effective account of the social climate of his day. For all his concentration on himself, Genet does occasionally tell truths about criminal society in his novels; and underlying 20th-century social conflicts *do* enter into his plays whether he consciously intends them to do so or not—as in the idea that *Les Bonnes* is a play about the impossibility of basing rebellion upon resentment. *The Balcony* can be seen (and Lucien Goldmann so interpreted it) as reflecting an important facet of the historical experience in the 1930s and '40s: the defeat of working class revolutionaries, and their replacement, both as the real holders of power and as the objects of admiration, by efficient police forces. But to present such an interpretation, an appeal has to be made to those everyday attitudes and experiences which need to be so completely forgotten if we are to appreciate Genet's novels as creating their own, purely autonomous world. It is a considerable dilemma. For once "rational criteria" are admitted to a discussion of Genet's plays, how can we exclude them from a consideration of his novels? And once these novels are seen from a commonsensical viewpoint (and appreciated largely for the occasional insights into the criminal world), then the various intellectual contradictions which they contain immediately become visible and split open the coherence of the poetic universe of imagery.

Unlike Martin Esslin[3] or Robert Brustein,[4] Dr. Coe is not trying to fit Genet into any particular category (the theatre of "the absurd" or the theatre of "revolt"), although he does recognise the points of similarity between Genet and Ionesco as well as the common ground between Genet's views and those of Antonin Artaud. (He sees Genet as presenting, as Ionesco does, works which are best described as tragic farces, and points out that Genet's early plays were a prefiguration of Artaud's theories in *Le Théâtre et son double*.) But Genet's theatre, Dr. Coe convincingly shows, is "a Theatre of Hatred." As such it perpetuates the essentially sterile defiance of bourgeois society first offered in his

[3] *The Theatre of the Absurd* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1963).
[4] *The Theatre of Revolt* (Little, Brown, Boston; Methuen, London).

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novels. What is so curious is that so many of those whom Genet insults and seeks to offend should be so enthusiastic about his work. For all his blasphemy, his popularity with both theatre-goers and critics is gradually making him into that most familiar of all literary establishment figures: the rebellious poet who derives a comfortable living from the masochism of the bourgeoisie. Is there a conceivable way out of the ironies of success, the contradictions of "making it" within a tolerant society? If there is, then Genet is the man to discover it.

How to write about Lenin — and how not to

By Alasdair MacIntyre

DISCUSSIONS of historical method rarely illuminate one crucial point: what kind of *rapport* must the historian have with his subject if he is to write about it successfully? Clearly it is not just a matter of a certain sympathy to be felt by the historian for his subject. A certain lack of sympathy may indeed be necessary. But it must be a lack of sympathy of the right kind. For those who intend to write about Lenin there are at least two prerequisites. The first is a sense of scale. One dare not approach greatness of a certain dimension (and what holds of Lenin would hold equally of Robespierre or of Napoleon) without a sense of one's own limitations. A Lilliputian who sets out to write Gulliver's biography had best take care. Above all he dare not be patronising. This danger is not entirely avoided by all the contributors to a new set of essays about Lenin.[1]

The second prerequisite is a sense of tragedy which will enable the historian to feel both the greatness and the failure of the October Revolution. Those for whom the whole project of the revolutionary liberation of mankind from exploitation and alienation is an absurd fantasy disqualify themselves from writing about Communism in the same way that those who find the notion of the supernatural redemption of the world from sin an outmoded superstition disqualify themselves from writing ecclesiastical history. How much can be achieved nonetheless is witnessed to by Gibbon and by Hume as well as by their successors; and how much is necessarily missed out is witnessed to at the same time. So far as the October Revolution is concerned, a sense of tragedy is as likely to be obliterated as effectively by the spirit of orthodox hagiography as it is by the philistinism so characteristic of much anti-Communism. Indeed orthodox hagiography has had to ignore entirely the truth about Lenin's last days.

Among Lenin's likes were cats, hunting, tidiness, and Pushkin; among his dislikes bohemianism, religion, and Mayakovsky. He once found himself unable to shoot a fox because "really she was so beautiful." He feared the power of great music to distract his energies and emotions from revolutionary ends. These and other opaque facts about his complex and subtle character are brought out in an excellent essay by Mr. Peter Reddaway entitled *Literature, the Arts and the Personality of Lenin*. Reddaway also notes the traits singled out by commentators as different as Trotsky, Lunacharsky, and Berdyaev, an overriding simplicity and certainty of revolutionary purpose. "Purity of heart," wrote Kierkegaard, "is to will one thing." It was Lenin's purity of heart that his opponents could not and his critics cannot bear. This trait has been the subject of much misunderstanding. It is often treated as a personal characteristic which Lenin simply happened to have, and so it will appear if it is detached from the theoretical judgments which informed it.

Professor Leonard Schapiro, Mr. Reddaway's co-editor, stresses Lenin's "fear that the revolution might be 'missed.' As he saw it, compromises, reforms, concessions by the government, a rise in living standards, could all easily operate to postpone or even render impossible or very difficult" the revolution predicted by Marx. What Schapiro does not discuss is the question of the source of this fear. To this question there may be a surprising answer. Lenin shared the views of those Marxists whom he was shortly to denounce as "economists" apparently up to his receiving in his Siberian exile in 1899 Eduard Bernstein's *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgabe der*

[1] *Lenin: the Man, the Theorist, the Leader.* Edited by Leonard Schapiro and Peter Reddaway. Pall Mall Press, 45s.

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Sozialdemokratie. That he then proceeded to refute and denounce Bernstein is well known; in this he was at one with every orthodox Marxist, including his future bitter enemy, Kautsky. But in this denunciation he did not continue to believe, as Kautsky believed, that the history of capitalism was moving forward in a law-governed way so that even if the transformation of the labour movement into a revolutionary socialist movement and the subsequent victory of socialism was not quite an automatic process, it was in some sense inevitable. It is difficult to see that Lenin took anywhere but from Bernstein his new belief that in the course of capitalism's development the working class might be domesticated and the trade unions become the instrument of that domestication. Certainly even on this point Lenin did not agree with Bernstein. What Bernstein thought was in fact going to happen, Lenin took to represent only one possibility, but it was the possibility which would be realised unless positive countervailing action were taken. In the very act of attempting to refute revisionism Lenin seems to have learnt from it.

THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION is then from 1899 onwards an urgent matter of will, organisation, and an eye for opportunity. Any road is permissible which runs more nearly towards the goal than any other road perceived at the same moment. This single criterion allows for a combination of undeviating purpose and flexibility of both tactics and doctrine. The flexibility of Lenin's doctrine has also another source. Lenin saw threats to the revolution from a number of directions quite as, if not more, clearly than he envisaged the road forward. Consequently he rarely devoted himself to expounding doctrine except in the context of polemic. Since he polemicised from time to time on several fronts and tended to allow his project of the moment to be aimed at defeating one particular enemy once and for all, it is not surprising that the key texts are not merely not entirely consistent with each other, but form, in some way, a collection of fragments. Out of these fragments a monument has been built—and admiration and enmity have both contributed to it—called "Leninism." But "Leninism" has a purely factitious unity. The doctrines of *State and Revolution* (1917), for example, contain elements which are found nowhere else in Lenin. Among these is a strongly stated belief in the possibility of the radical democratisation of society immediately after the socialist revolution. This belief is not only at odds with Lenin's general attitude to the working class; it is one that he never seems to have taken seriously when within a year the revolution had occurred and he was proceeding to construct the socialist order. Again if we compare his attitude to the working class under capitalism in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902) with that in *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916) there is at least a crucial difference of emphasis. In the former he sees the natural trend in the development of the working class as being non-revolutionary; in the latter he sees the non-revolutionary character of the working class as having to be explained by the use of the superprofits of imperialism to buy off the aristocracy of labour. It is not that these two theses could not under certain conditions be reconciled. It is rather that Lenin tends to confront problems in isolation from each other.

Nor is this surprising. Lenin poses the problem of the transition to socialism. About this Marx said very little, Engels only slightly more and Engels' remarks on victory through parliamentary elections and the outdatedness of military insurrections were scarcely likely to be appreciated by Lenin. Classical Marxism is a doctrine in which insight into the bourgeois societies of the mid- and late-19th century was bought at the price of all too close a reflection of the categories of that society in its own theories. In consequence when Marxism came to be applied to new situations at the end of the 19th

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century and the beginning of the 20th century would-be Marxists were left with a good deal of freedom, both theoretical and practical. The phenomena of imperialism, for example, evoked quite different responses from Rosa Luxemburg, from Lenin in 1899 and from Lenin in 1916. In *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (1899), as Professor Alec Nove points out in his outstanding essay on *Lenin as Economist,* Lenin argued against Peter Struve that foreign trade can be a means by which capitalism can rid itself of surpluses which it cannot sell on the home market. According to *Imperialism*—and Lenin makes no reference to his own past views—such surpluses *can* at least for a time be exported. But this very inconsistency is a sign of the degree of freedom which Marxist theorists possessed at this period.

This freedom to theorise within a framework which was a good deal less constraining than even the Marxist theorists themselves believed and liked to believe makes the old question of whether Lenin was or was not a genuine and orthodox Marxist one to which rival answers can with equal plausibility be given. Some of these rival answers are discussed by Professor J. C. Rees who points out acutely how one can frame an impressive case—as Sukhanov and other Mensheviks did—for saying that on Marxist grounds Russia was in 1917 far from ready for a proletarian revolution; but that one could also in 1917 have framed an impressive case for saying that Marxist theory supplied no ready-made recipes for application to Russia and that what was required was a creative re-making of the Marxist categories.

NOT ALL THE CONTRIBUTORS to this volume are as clear as Professor Rees is about the kind of advantage that we have over Lenin in being able to view his actions as he could not, just because we know what happened next. The shadow of what happened next can far too easily be allowed to obscure what in fact happened. It ought also to be remarked that Mensheviks have been better at writing memoirs since 1917 than they were at making political decisions at the time. For when the worst has been said about Lenin it is clear that there was *no* possibility of Marxist revolution except for that which Lenin seized upon and indeed partly created. We ought not to confuse a proper grasp of the tragic dimensions of the October Revolution with the sentimentality that actually prefers tragic failures of integrity to any substantial achievement and so idolises Martov and even finds it far easier to come to terms with Trotsky or Rosa Luxemburg than with Lenin, just because in the end they were losers. But of course nonetheless Lenin lost too. His late

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protests against bureaucracy, against the low level of Soviet culture and more specifically against Stalin—those protests which the hagiographers cannot take seriously—in no way amount to any kind of renunciation of the revolution, but Lenin did nonetheless acknowledge some of his responsibility for some of the negative sides of the Soviet Revolution. Yet Stalinism was not in any sense the legitimate successor even of the negative sides of Lenin's work. The claim that Stalin's work continued Lenin's is familiar not only from Stalinist pens, but also in the writings of those critics of Lenin who wish to fasten on him responsibility for a variety of policies which he never envisaged.

To those critics one must concede at least two points. The first is that Lenin of course was always prepared for tactical retreats from socialist principles and was prepared to be almost indefinitely flexible and adaptive; but where Lenin recognised such retreats for what they were, Stalin presented them as advances towards socialism and in the course of doing so redefined socialism away into tyranny. The second is that it is certainly true that underlying such Leninist retreats was a crude utilitarianism: the end of socialism justifies any necessary means. But the key word here is "necessary." The memoirs of Victor Serge, for example, witness to Lenin's personal humanity in 1917–18. There was never in Lenin the sense of pleasure in terror or the sense of gratuitous *personal* hostility so evident in Stalin. It remains true that such utilitarianism corrupts and corrupted, that it formed the moral link between Lenin and Stalin.

Lenin's was an heroic attempt to force a social situation unforeseen by Marx into the categories of Marxist theory, and to do this not merely in theory but in deed. The future as Lenin envisaged it was the same future which Marx had envisaged. The past which Lenin viewed was the past which Marx had depicted. Lenin's task was to remake the present so that it might be a bridge between that past and that future. The intractability of that present, its refusal to be moulded in Leninist ways, teaches the moral that Leninism provides us with few, if any, specific political recipes; what Lenin achieved in spite of that intractability carries the moral that this may not be as important as Lenin's detractors have thought.

It is sad that some of the contributors to the present generally excellent book of essays are among those who are detractors and nothing more. They provide us on the whole with evidence as to how not to write about Lenin: Dr. Katkov, for example, produces speculations about Lenin's psychological need to hold certain philosophical views in an essay in which it is difficult to know whether the ill-grounded psychological guesses are more objectionable than the lack of understanding of the philosophy displayed. Dr. Keep produces statements about Lenin ("Lenin's mind was of course shaped paramountly—indeed, almost exclusively—by Marxism" and "Lenin continued to believe that laws and institutions had no real part to play in regulating the life of a socialist order") which are not merely false but so obviously so that one cannot quite understand the inclusion of his essay in the volume. But other contributors, including not only those whom I have mentioned earlier but also Mr. John Erickson in a splendidly achieved piece on *Lenin as Civil War Leader* and Mr. Harry Willetts on *Lenin and the Peasants*, make this a book on which its editors are for the most part to be congratulated.

Heian Jane

The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon. Translated and edited by Ivan Morris. *Oxford University Press*, 55s. **A Companion Volume.** By Ivan Morris. *Oxford University Press*, 84s.

People who complain that Jane Austen's books have little to do with "life" ought to be made to study the literature of the Heian period, of the aristocratic world of 10th-century Japan. Admittedly Heian society, as we know of it through the prose writings of its ladies, did go in for sex, but rather as an exquisite exercise in social manners than as anything spiritually more momentous for better or worse. To a large extent, it seems to have been a question of skilfully calculated risk, of knowing how much to let other people know about and how much not to. The "next-morning letter" which the lover was obliged to send his mistress appears to have loomed larger than whatever happened the night before. The Japanese were—are?—an incorrigibly literary people!

Miss Austen admits farmers to the human race. On her way to the Kamo Shrines one day, Miss Shōnagon observes some oddly dressed women moving backwards across a field, bending down and then straightening up again—"for what purpose I cannot imagine." Ivan Morris comments that the occupation of planting rice, a common sight, was "one that no elegant Court lady would admit to recognising"—just

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as once our ladies could not admit to recognising certain words used by our gentlemen. Moreover, Shōnagon disapproves of these particular peasants because they are singing a disrespectful song about the *hototogisu*, a poetic bird and hence the property of the upper classes. No nonsense about folk culture here. We notice, however, that a little later on Shōnagon is less coy when it comes to recognising the operation of reaping the rice. But perhaps consistency was regarded as boring and vulgar. Among "Things That People Despise" she includes "Someone with an excessive reputation for goodness."

The common people are referred to here by such polite circumlocutions—though this one may be literally true—as "the people of whom one does not know how to speak." And in a list of "Unsuitable Things" Shōnagon mentions "Snow on the houses of common people," adding that "This is especially regrettable when the moonlight shines down on it." And probably, in our day, we do need Professor Morris' gloss: "Because such beauty is wasted on *hoi polloi* and inappropriate to their gross nature." There were no working-class poets at that time, no scholarship-boy scholars.

Shōnagon herself was quite a poet, though Professor Morris remarks that her poems are often more ingenious than poetic—an observation which, I would think, applies to a lot of Japanese poetry of whatever date. She is sensitive in all the proper respects, and insensitive in the proper respects too. Thus she finds the "parasite tree" moving or pathetic because it is dependent for its existence on other trees. But when a rather common fellow whose house has burnt down in a fire originating in the Imperial Stables comes to the palace hoping for alms, Shōnagon presents him with a peculiarly obscure and unfeeling poem, thus winning the admiring laughter of her companions, including the Empress. The scheme of priorities and the compartmentation of the sensibility seem, if I may say so, not un-Japanese.

Of course it would be useless to reproach Shōnagon for her undemocratic attitudes. It is equally silly to admire her for them, since they were merely inherited. The highly ritualistic Heian civilisation represented in Shōnagon's journals and (more romantically, Arthur Waley has suggested, and less accurately) in Lady Murasaki's novel, *The Tale of Genji*, will have a special appeal for the modern reader—how Shōnagon would hate to think she was read by us common readers!—and is likely to be overestimated. Though not, it would seem, by the more sceptical scholars. Professor Morris' comments are sometimes quite tart, albeit expressed in rather gingerly fashion, as if he feared

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Shōnagon might materialise in his study and stab him with a double-edged quotation, while Waley (who translated about a quarter of *The Pillow Book*, interspersing it with his own commentary) remarked that the "figures and appurtenances" of the period sometimes seem to us "to be cut out of thin, transparent paper." Stretches of *The Pillow Book* are plain boring, and could have been composed by some lady-in-waiting of our own day or yesterday—"everything about well-born people delights me"—though she would need to be a lady with a sharp visual sense and a gift for writing fashion notes.

BUT NEITHER IS THIS the whole story. Shōnagon was not herself of especially elevated birth (though a distinguished poet, her father was also a provincial governor, a class of people not highly regarded at court), and it seems probable that she was not a beauty either. To keep her end up, she was dependent on her learning (or her reputation for learning), her ready wit and her ready tongue. "In this palace one is always sorry when one has made some inadvertent remark," whines the Captain First Secretary, who has just been smartly put down by Shōnagon in the matter of an inapt poetic allusion. One likes to think of this sharp-tongued lady keeping the under-employed and over-dressed courtiers on their toes. It says something for Heian civilisation that Shōnagon was not rudely silenced! Within the limits firmly imposed by social assumptions which apparently no one questioned seriously, she was truly what in a hardly covert self-reference she describes herself as—"a woman who has quick wits and a mind of her own."

Her shrewdness, among other qualities, comes out in one of the liveliest sections of *The Pillow Book*, on "Hateful Things," where, as in most of her catalogues, sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo rub shoulders with feelings which strike us as arbitrary and esoteric. On the one hand,

> One is telling a story about old times when someone breaks in with a little detail that he happens to know, implying that one's own version is inaccurate—disgusting behaviour!

On the other,

> An elderly person warms the palms of his hands over a brazier and stretches out the wrinkles. No young man would dream of behaving in such a fashion; old people can really be quite shameless.

Then we have this:

> A man with whom one is having an affair keeps singing the praises of some woman he used to know. Even if it is a thing of the past, this can be very annoying. How much more so if he is still seeing the woman! (Yet sometimes I find that it is not as unpleasant as all that.)

Fleas too, we hear, are very hateful—we are reminded of Pope's incongruous juxtapositions in *The Rape of the Lock* ("Or stain her honour or her new brocade")—"When they dance about under someone's clothes, they really seem to be lifting them up." A little later one is told how "Sometimes one greatly dislikes a person for no particular reason—and then that person goes and does something hateful." Though not exactly a pleasant one, Shōnagon was certainly a rare character, and cut out of something much tougher than paper.

AT FIRST INTIMIDATING SIGHT we might wonder whether Professor Morris' edition isn't somewhat over-annotated. The *Companion Volume*, considerably longer than *The Pillow Book* itself, contains over a thousand notes, some of them short essays, a glossary, and ten appendixes which include genealogies, maps, diagrams of offices and ranks, and illustrations of clothes, interiors, vehicles and other articles occurring in the text. But in practice the system of annotation is the simplest and most accessible imaginable; all you need is room to place the two books open side by side, and the work is almost done for you. While the word *tabisho* is explained in note 347, it is left without explanation on its first appearance, in note 103. Since the term is defined in the glossary—and indeed its significance is fairly clear from its context in the earlier note—this is a trivial criticism. That one should bother to make it is an indication of the over-all efficiency and satisfyingness of the explicatory and critical apparatus. The only misprint I have noticed is equally minor:

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"he" instead of "she" at the top of p. 166 in the *Companion Volume*.

Professor Morris' translation of Shōnagon is written in good, lucid, straightforward English, and he has reserved his personal feelings for the *Companion Volume*. One gathers that Waley's partial version is a good deal freer and more fanciful than one may have supposed hitherto. But one is still grateful for it, as for so much else of his work. Having already produced a sort of companion to the great Heian novel in his earlier book, *The World of the Shining Prince* (1964), perhaps Professor Morris will now give us a new translation of *The Tale of Genji*.

D. J. Enright

Failure upon Failure

Brian Howard—Portrait of a Failure. By MARIE-JAQUELINE LANCASTER. *Blond*, 70s.

THE BEST THING in this book occurs in the first four pages. It is an autobiographical article by Brian Howard, written apparently in answer to a request by *Harper's* of New York for some "background material." They had published a few poems by him and hoped for more. Brian left the autobiography unfinished and the flow of poems soon dried up. That was just one of the essays in unfulfilment of which Brian's unhappy life was composed. Rightly is this book called *Portrait of a Failure*. Unfortunately beyond the title not much else is right with it.

It is a mistake to put the best aria first in an opera; it raises expectations which can never be fulfilled (even by Handel who made this mistake in *Xerce* which opens with the celebrated "*Ombra mai fu*"). Brian's little autobiographical sketch is not a masterpiece to be compared with Handel at any time, but it takes on positive lustre against the drab background of the rest of this book. Mrs. Marie-Jaqueline Lancaster seems to shy away from responsibility for the book's appearance and describes herself not as the author but as the editor. The diminution in status does not help her out of her difficulty; she shows herself to be as inept as an editor as she is in authorship. She is a stranger to the delights of concise presentation. There is no point which she does not labour. She never lets a story tell itself but always likes to nudge

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480 pp. 16 pp. illustrations 45/-

CASSELL

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the reader into the appropriate mood, and she has a gift for filling a dozen pages with full quotation where one page of extracts would do. Let me give an example. Brian Howard's happiest days were at Oxford which he left in 1926. In June 1927 he wrote a memoir of that time produced in the undergraduate magazine *The Cherwell*. The article is reproduced in full in the course of fifteen pages. I think only two of the many names mentioned there are unknown to me, but even so I could hardly get through the thing. I do not blame Brian for this, any more than I would blame anyone whose article after forty years has lost its freshness. I very much blame the editorship. Fifteen pages! What must these be like, what chasms and yawning horrors of tedium must these pages mean to someone to whom all the names are obscure?

Another critic has said that the story of Brian Howard should have been contained in fifty pages. Considering the length and variety of his life I think the judgment is a bit too austere: I would suggest seventy-five. This book runs to six hundred and twenty-six. Brian had many failings but he was not a bore. It has been left to his biographer to achieve the difficult feat of making him into one, and the achievement is fatal. Nothing else is likely to be written about him after so exhaustive an effort, although his story is well worth telling.

It is a moral tale devoid of subtlety but full of colour and interest, like an up-to-date version of *The Rake's Progress* or *The Industrious and the Idle Apprentice*. Brian was the idlest of all the apprentices of my time. Counting in Oxford terms I was a generation younger, but he was a frequent visitor from the preceding age in my first year. If "old boys" were allowed by Oxford custom, he would have been one. He had enjoyed a spectacular reputation as a literary figure at Eton (of which non-Etonians like myself knew nothing) but by late 1926 when I first met him, the reputation had faded. Already he was a bit of a joke: a character, yes, a matchless entertainer, a person one just "must" have at the party, all that yes, but only the simplest souls looked to a great literary future. I think that Mrs. Lancaster has been badly misinformed about Brian's early promise. It vanished rapidly and early, soon after his schooldays. Unfortunately, and this is the point and tragedy of the story, Brian himself for long went on believing in that radiant promise, so rashly encouraged by Edith Sitwell.

Brian's *dégringolade* (he always liked using French words whether they were necessary or not) started immediately after Oxford. He had enjoyed a great deal of social success at the University, using the term snobbishly, and this is rather frowned on by the editor. In fact Brian's absurd hunting and shooting and country-house phase gave him far more innocent happiness and usefulness than his hopeless efforts to be a leader of modern art and sociology. Daphne Fielding, the supreme figure of young fashion in the mid-'20s, and with whom Brian was passionately in love, rightly says that he taught her to love beauty. He had something to give to the world of Daphne such as he never had to the world of advanced culture in which he believed he deserved to shine. If his talents were real they were modest and distinctly old-fashioned and '90ish. Unlikely as it may seem at first sight to any witness of his slothful life, he was partly ruined by ambition.

He was probably deceived as to the extent of his talents by his conversational skill which was indeed remarkable. When I first knew him he decided to take my musical education in hand. Brian knew nothing about music at all, but he knew a lot about fashion and he was horrified to learn that I was, as I still am, a passionate Wagnerite. He wanted me to devote myself exclusively to *"Les Six."* He lectured me, and in the course of the nonsense he talked he said one thing which I have never forgotten. "Wagner, my dear," he said, "with him it's always thunder or treacle." I think that is one of the best anti-Wagner remarks I have ever heard.

As Oxford receded, as the bloom of youth faded, he was forced to recognise that he must justify his intellectual pretensions. If they had been less enormous he might have succeeded. After some ten years of idleness, and a switch in snobbery from fashionable nobility to fashionable intelligentsia, he produced a slim and lousy book of poems, but soon showed journalistic ability. Brian could quite easily have become another Hannen Swaffer, a clever, vulgar and very entertaining columnist. But he was too ambitious. He wanted to be the English Jean Cocteau. Whatever his friends may say now, he never could have been that, no matter how hard he worked, and he was quite incapable of work. There followed a long, pitiful story of mental and physical decline in which Brian tried to recapture his lost eminence by every sort of silly device, including that of adopting a fellow-travelling Communist attitude. This episode is well depicted in Cyril Connolly's exquisitely titled satire, "Where Engels fears to tread." I must go back on my words. As a piece of writing this may be considered the best thing in the book.

One of the few enduring reasons for giving some respect to Brian is the fact that he knew Germany intimately by 1933 and was never deceived by Nazism. He saw it clear for what

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it was. This was not a result of healthy bias deriving from his largely Jewish ancestry, for Brian was wholly uninterested in Jewry or his own Jewishness; it was the result of a good civilised education. He helped German and other friends in danger and behaved well in the first stages of Europe's great crisis. All honour to him for that. Would that one could say more! Would that one did not have to shove in the niggardly qualification "first stages."

In the summer of 1940, this pacifist of 1938 escaped from falling France and obtained a position in M.I.5. He abused his authority in that department so monstrously that when he joined the R.A.F. after dismissal, his promotion to officer status was officially and effectively blocked. He made the war more bearable, however, by his playful misconduct in the R.A.F., of which stories, true and false, circulated widely. Mrs. Lancaster recalls these stories, but gives a sweetened version of Brian in M.I.5. She appears not to have heard about the worst of his behaviour as a person entrusted with confidential information. It is knowledge of what he did then which has since disgusted me utterly with Brian Howard's character, though my own relations with him were always very agreeable.

In the post-war years the tragedy of Brian took on a deeper note. A genuine merit of this book is that it illustrates a remarkable change which came over him as alcoholism, drugs, and acceptance of total homosexualism confronted this former spoilt child of fortune. It may be said from the evidence of his letters that "he came to himself." The emptiness of his ambition, the essential folly of his life was no longer hidden from him and he faced the fact boldly, but also hopelessly. He tried to cure himself of drink and drugs, but without success; he never tried the impossible feat of trying to cure himself of homosexualism, or the possible one of exerting self-control, so his last years were spent in trying to get "reconsideration" of his case by various governments which had excusably kicked him out for the corruption of young people. He wandered forlornly on short term *permis de séjour*. One virtue he retained, physical courage. After the death of his boy friend in 1957 he committed suicide with a fearless determination which compels one's admiration. The bravado at least was undimmed.

Apart from its enormous length and literary amateurishness, the book's principal fault is that its intention is obscure. Is this a candid endeavour to tell the truth about a strange human life, or an attempt to put Brian Howard back on the map from which he slipped around

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1927? My guess is that Mrs. Lancester started with the first intention and got side-tracked into the second. This makes the book even worse than it need be, as it induces her to write stuff like this:

> It seems impossible for most homosexuals to keep within faithful limits, in the way that many husbands and wives do despite equal temptations, and people tend to be more censorious of homosexual than heterosexual promiscuity, though why this should be is not clear unless the Victorian idea of "married" women not enjoying sex still prevails. Brian was certainly to come in for his share of national disapproval on this score.

I have spent a long time puzzling over the significance of the inverted commas in the first sentence.

The book is sandwiched between a foreword and an appendix, the first by Maurice Richardson, the second by Philip Toynbee. Neither is good. Maurice Richardson, too knowing and too much the café psychologist, shows the same sort of confusion as Mrs. Lancaster: he starts out to analyse and falls back on far-fetched defence. His endeavour to crack up Brian Howard at the expense of Evelyn Waugh is not intelligent. Philip Toynbee goes to every length he can think of to convert us to his belief "that Brian Howard was a genuine minor poet." We are given a large selection from which to judge. The poems remind him of Eliot, Pound, Auden, and other modern masters. They remind me of the work of Enoch Soames; in fact, "To a Young Woman" (Soames' finest poem, I think) could easily have been reprinted here without anyone noticing for quite a time. Held up high for our admiration is Brian's supposed best, an allegorical work called "Gone to Report," about the disappearance of "Mr. Pleasure." This poem has even been intoned on the Third Programme. It seems to me just as bad as a poem can be.

The book is not entirely valueless as a reference work for anyone interested in the odd semi-fashionable, semi-bohemian world which it records. It shows the result of careful research, though the contents of one book which interested Brian are given with absurd inaccuracy. The point would be unimportant if Mrs. Lancaster had not then quoted Brian's review at the usual enormous length. A contribution from Lord Birkenhead is either misquoted or misedited or written under a delusion. He appears to write as one who belonged to pre-Howard Oxford, and thus witnessed the impact of the neo-aesthetes of 1923–26. This would mean that he must have matriculated and entered Christ Church at about the age of fourteen or a little earlier, a feat of which I believe him capable, but I am sure it would have become common knowledge before now if he had pulled it off.

Christopher Sykes

The Slump, Then & Now

By Goronwy Rees

THIS BOOK[1] has appeared at a moment when one feels almost irresistibly compelled to look for a parallel between the fortunes of the Labour Government of 1929–1931, and those of the present Labour Government. Indeed, popular opinion has already found one. "Three Labour governments, three devaluations," is likely to become an effective electoral slogan, though it ignores the fact that it was not a Labour government but a National coalition which carried out the devaluation of 1931.

Yet only a short time ago, any comparison between the governments of Ramsay MacDonald and of Harold Wilson would not have seemed very convincing. Who could be less alike, MacDonald "the boneless wonder," and Harold Wilson, that exponent of firm government and the strong hand at the helm? Who indeed could be more aware of, and more determined not to repeat, MacDonald's mistakes than our present Prime Minister? Who could be less like Philip Snowden than Jim Callaghan? Where is the Jimmy Thomas, the Oswald Mosley, of the present Cabinet? And personalities apart, how can the economic situation in Britain today be compared with that of 1929–1931, when unemployment rose to three millions? Even more, how can one compare MacDonald's government

[1] *Politicians and the Slump. The Labour Government of 1929–1931.* By ROBERT SKIDELSKY. Macmillan, 84s.

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with Wilson's in respect of economic knowledge, insight, sophistication? Did Keynes, has Kaldor, lived for nothing? Why, in 1931, MacDonald had not even heard of "macro-economics." To Mr. Wilson they are child's play; even Mr. Callaghan has mugged them up at Nuffield, while Roy Jenkins has them at his finger-tips.

One could multiply such differences indefinitely, and given their existence, it would seem unfair both to MacDonald and to Wilson to insist on any comparison between them. Unfair to MacDonald, because in many respects his task was an even harder one than Wilson's; how could he hope to save Britain in a world in which unemployment had risen to thirty millions and threatened to destroy, not merely the British economy, but the capitalist system as a whole? By comparison, Mr. Wilson's task is a piece of cake. But unfair also to Mr. Wilson, because MacDonald failed so dismally that he wrecked the Labour Party for nearly fifteen years, and Mr. Wilson, so far at least, has come nothing near to such a disaster. Indeed, having at last discovered the virtues of devaluation he cannot contain himself at the prospect of the good things it will bring to us.

So many, and such large points of difference should convince one that Mr. Skidelsky's book has no lessons for us today. We should read it for what it is, an admirably lucid and well-documented account of the events leading up to the fall of the second Labour Government which fills a notable gap in contemporary history. Mr. Skidelsky writes very well, and with great clarity and economy; his account is all the more valuable because he breathes life into the dry bones of parliamentary debates, Cabinet memoranda and Civil Service minutes by relating them to a conflict of ideas and ideologies which passionately engaged men's minds and hearts.

For this alone one should be grateful. But one does not have to read very far in his book to become uneasily aware that, despite the obvious differences between then and now, it may after all be relevant to our present problems; and one does not have to read much further before one begins to suspect that perhaps, in certain fundamental respects, the situation may have changed not at all. Some reviewers of *Politicians and the Slump* have dismissed any analogies it may have with the present by applying Marx's axiom that history repeats itself, once as tragedy and once as farce. But this is really to miss the point of them, which is rather that, if MacDonald and his government were indeed involved in tragedy, then it may have been a tragedy which has continued

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until the present day, like one of those terrible Greek legends in which the doom of a family plays itself out in one generation after another.

MR. SKIDELSKY'S story is, he says in his introduction, the story of "the defeat of the economic radicals by the economic conservatives," and the particular problem to which he addresses himself is how it came about that a Labour government, faced with a crisis caused by mass unemployment, should have allied itself with the conservatives rather than the radicals. The answer he gives is a fairly simple one. Labour's own cure for unemployment was the total transformation of society as a result of the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. But in the circumstances of 1929 to 1931 this was a purely Utopian programme, as it remains today; and no one, least of all MacDonald, thought for a moment that it could be put into practice. Thus MacDonald was launched on an uncharted sea, without guide or compass. The most Socialism could do for him was to provide a convenient scapegoat. "So, my friends," he declared to a rapturous Labour Party Conference at Llandudno in 1930,

> we are not on trial; it is the system under which we live . . . it has broken down everywhere, as it was bound to break down . . . I appeal to you to go back to your socialist faith. Do not mix that up with pettifogging patching.

But if Socialist faith could not be justified by works, and if "pettifogging patching" was only a vain attempt to give new life to a doomed system, where could MacDonald turn for guidance? Why, to nowhere else than what Mr. Skidelsky describes as "the Treasury view," the policy of what Keynes called the "Ins" of the British establishment. For what MacDonald meant by "pettifogging patching" was the ideas of all those who urged him to take immediate and positive action to meet the crisis and offered him their support in doing so—of Lloyd George and his liberal followers, of Keynes, who with Hubert Henderson and Seebohm Rowntree had written Lloyd George's election manifesto, *We Can Conquer Unemployment*, of Oswald Mosley in his own Cabinet, of economists and businessmen who believed that the needs of industry were being sacrificed to those of the Bank of England and the City of London. Though a minority, they were a powerful and articulate minority and could offer MacDonald valuable electoral and parliamentary support. But they were also the "Outs" of the establishment. Lloyd George was mistrusted by everybody. Keynes was regarded as incorrigibly flighty and irresponsible and had not yet found a coherent theoretical basis for the projects in which his mind was so fertile. Such allies were altogether too suspect for MacDonald's socialist respectability; he preferred to entrust himself, the party and the country to the rigid orthodoxy of Philip Snowden, the Bank, the City and the Treasury.

One should not blame MacDonald too much. He did no worse, if no better, than other statesmen faced with the same desperate problems (Dr. Brüning in Germany, for instance, or President Hoover in the United States). The only difference was that MacDonald was supposed to have a socialist answer to the crisis, while they did not. The Treasury view had the attraction that it presented a consistent and coherent body of doctrine, which was supported by long years of successful experience and was backed by the still immense prestige and financial skill of the Bank of England and the City. There was nothing wrong with it except that it had ceased to correspond to reality, and for the sake of an illusion condemned Britain to years of continuous deflation. Others besides MacDonald succumbed to its attractions with less excuse.

ONE SHOULD BLAME MacDonald all the less perhaps because thirty-five years later another Labour government, faced by another crisis, made a similar choice to his, and clung to it for three years until at last it was shown to be no choice at all. And at least MacDonald, until he was forced to a decision, consulted every conceivable view, however unorthodox, flirted with Lloyd George, toyed with the idea of a Council of State in which all parties should pool their ideas for overcoming the crisis. It was not for lack of inviting advice that he failed. Mr. Wilson appears to have made up his mind immediately on taking office that there was no alternative to maintaining the value of sterling,

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and, it would seem, suppressed any advice he received to the contrary. His decision seems today all the more remarkable because it was taken in the face of an extremely powerful body of theoretical economic opinion and because it effectively prohibited him from carrying out the promises by which he had succeeded in winning two elections.

One might well say that, until now, the history of Mr. Wilson's government has equally with MacDonald's been the history of the victory of economic conservatism over economic radicalism. But Mr. Skidelsky's book also suggests, not merely that the two governments responded to an economic crisis in the same way, but that in some respects they were reacting to the same crisis. Mr. Skidelsky rightly points out that, by 1931, MacDonald was in fact faced not by one crisis but by two, which were of very different kinds, so that measures taken to overcome the one might well only aggravate the other. There was, in the first place, the world economic depression, which in what Arnold Toynbee called the *annus terribilis* of 1931 had reached its most acute phase. But in Britain the world depression was superimposed upon another, long-term, secular depression which was due to causes operating long before the world crisis set in and continuing to operate long after it was over. Indeed it can be said that they still continue to operate today. If in Britain in the 1920s they manifested themselves in a level of unemployment which never fell below 10% of the working population, in Britain since the war they have shown themselves in a permanent balance-of-payments problem. Both have proved themselves equally baffling to governments, whether Labour or Conservative, but though the problems have taken a different form their underlying causes have remained the same.

Those causes were primarily the decline of Britain's traditional industries, which were the foundation of her export trade, and her inability to replace them by new industries which were equally competitive in world markets. But there were also other, less easily defined causes, connected with the structure and organisation of British industry as a whole. The decline from Empire showed itself in effects which could not be measured purely in terms of statistics. Mr. Skidelsky quotes from a remarkable memorandum on Britain's industrial weaknesses written for Lloyd George by Arthur (later Lord) Salter, a great Civil Servant who, in 1930, was the British representative on the economic commission of the League of Nations and had the advantage of taking a more than insular view

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of his country's troubles. Britain, said Salter, suffered from "a more static and less elastic economic system than we find in any other country." Among other reasons for this condition he included the conservatism of industrialists and their heavy commitment in old plant; "the dead hand on development" exercised by the banks, which in many industries had legal control (through overdrafts), but felt no responsibility for management or re-equipment and were not fitted either by knowledge, technical skill or tradition to impose reorganisation; the dead weight of fixed charges and obligations, which were heavier than anywhere else in the world; the penalties imposed on frequent changes of plant by the administration of income tax; the systems of labour demarcation and industrial traineeship which discouraged adaptability to a disastrous extent. Such features, said Salter, gave British industry an unparalleled rigidity at a time when elasticity was imperative.

Even in Britain things change; but not so fast that Salter's analysis is today out-of-date. The picture he drew was of a country weighed down by the inheritance of its past, and paralysed by a rigidity of mind and structure which refused to adapt themselves to rapidly changing conditions or to accept the reality of Britain's fundamentally changed position in the world. In essence this picture remains as true now as it was then, and it presents a problem no government in this century has succeeded in solving. The "Treasury view," and the willingness of even Labour governments to accept it when under pressure, has had no small part in this failure; for the "Treasury view" implicitly depended on the assumption that in some way or other it was possible to restore the conditions under which it would be possible for Britain to play, even in a diminished degree, the same kind of part that she had played in the world economy in the past.

Is it possible that at last the lesson has been learned that such an assumption no longer has any validity when applied to the real world rather than the fictional one of classical economics? That with devaluation and a new Chancellor Britain now has a breathing space, perhaps for the last time, in which she will be able to create for herself a position in the world adapted to her real needs, resources and capacities? Such a change is indeed devoutly to be wished, yet it is difficult to suppress one's suspicions that not even devaluation, not even perhaps Mr. Jenkins, on whom so many people now fix their hopes, will in themselves be quite enough to reverse an historical process which has continued throughout the present century.

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After Mistah Kurtz

Poets of Reality. By J. Hillis Miller. *Oxford*, 48s.

Poets of reality reads somewhat like the concluding chapters of a serial, a serial begun by J. Hillis Miller in his earlier book, *The Disappearance of God*. There, for Tennyson, Arnold, the young Hopkins, God seemed to have withdrawn from the world, to be isolated at the end of some unbridgeable perspective, while the poet tried with varying degrees of success to get him back. The next step, Mr. Miller tells us, was that "the unseen God of Arnold or Tennyson becomes the dead God of Nietzsche." *Poets of Reality* takes up the story from here: "If the disappearance of God is presupposed by much Victorian poetry, the death of God is the starting point for many 20th-century writers." And so the narrative concludes with "the journey beyond nihilism toward a poetry of reality." With the appearance of "the new art" things appear to be taking a turn for the better: "The new art which gradually emerges in the work of Yeats, Eliot, Thomas, and Stevens reaches full development in the poetry of William Carlos Williams." There runs through Miller's argument a subtle implication that art makes progress, that Williams is somehow a more considerable poet than Yeats or Eliot because he carries this progress to "full development." It is not so much a question of value judgments on individual poems—indeed, Miller seems shy about making them and he rarely follows out the course of an entire poem; it is rather that poets receive their honours for the role they play in a new myth of a re-association that puts right the old one about dissociation.

The crucial figure for Mr. Miller is not a poet but a novelist, Joseph Conrad, and with him the book opens. Conrad takes us "to the limit of nihilism, and so opens the way beyond it": "By following the path of nihilism to the end, man confronts once again a spiritual power external to himself." Even though this may appear as horror, it is, says Mr. Miller, beyond that subjectivism which, having drunk up reality, brought on nihilism. The darkness which overwhelms Kurtz, if not the darkness of God, is good for man though not for Kurtz.

Mr. Miller's summaries of what he is going to tell us or what he has told us, are often weaker than the insights which accrue once he faces the work of literature. In the Conrad

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chapter he does this far more rigorously than almost anywhere else in the book: thus the varieties of "darkness," as revealed in his painstaking study of the novels, elude any simple summary and attest to the brilliance of Miller's approach once he can side-step his own critical historicism. It is the novels themselves that save him: there is no distracting superstructure of occult beliefs as with Yeats, or a dissertation on F. H. Bradley as with Eliot, to lead him into what, beside the existence of the poems, seems like a wilderness of spectral and sometimes lunatic abstractions.

From Conrad we go directly to Yeats, presumably because he illustrates that gradual emergence of "the new art." Yet the step seems strangely arbitrary: one begins by feeling there is definitely a missing presence and one comes to identify that presence as D. H. Lawrence. For it is Lawrence who consciously faces the darkness, resolved to press forward beyond "the defeat" of Hardy, Bennett, and Conrad. If the whole story is to be told—and *Poets of Reality* is one of those long books which promises such a venture—to leave out Lawrence falsifies what has happened. "So good," writes Lawrence of Conrad, "but why this giving in before you start.... I can't forgive Conrad for being so sad and for giving in." Whether or not Lawrence is fair to Conrad here, need not concern us. What does is that he reacts against a situation where, for Mr. Miller, Conrad occupies the centre. It is Lawrence rather than Yeats who diagnoses in depth that "will to power over things" expressed in Conrad's world of imperialism, and it is Lawrence rather than William Carlos Williams who persists in asking questions, in the post-nihilist world, in their full religious dimension. The need after Conrad is "to walk barefoot in reality," says Miller, adopting Wallace Stevens' phrase. Lawrence did just that and without Stevens' self-protectiveness: "Each thing, living or unliving, streams in its own odd, intertwining flux, and nothing, not even man nor the God of man, nor anything that man has thought or felt or known, is fixed or abiding. All moves. And nothing is true, or good, or right, except in its own living relatedness to its own circumambient universe; to the things that are in the stream with it." In his art Lawrence dramatises this relatedness and no account of what Mr. Miller calls "the plunge into the density of an exterior world" can be adequate that ignores the extent of Lawrence's commitment to that plunge.

But the story is left to Yeats, Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Stevens, and finally Williams. Eliot has "recovered a new version of Christian immanence," the others "have gradually developed a poetry beyond subjectivism and dualism":

> *The light*
> *for all time shall outspeed*
> *the thunder crack*

"This radiant promise," writes Miller, "is the climax of Williams' writing, and the climax of the development so far of 20th-century poetry." The tone here reminds one of the work of another overcomer of dualisms to whom Miller owes a good deal, namely, Marshall McLuhan, concluding his *Gutenberg Galaxy*: "And this dramatic struggle of unlike modes of human insight and outlook has resulted in the greatest of all human ages, whether in the arts or in the sciences." Miller's fanfare is more discreet, but just as in McLuhan's various accounts of the "field" perception of modern literature overleaping the Cartesian gap, it is the poetry itself which is oddly slighted for all the tangents of insight that ray out around it. Again, reading Miller on Yeats, what one gets is a rather more expertly conducted tour of the Yeats' "world" than we have had previously, but the poems seem almost marginal to all this. Instead of the poetry carrying the charge, it leaks out through passages of abstract explanation about Yeats' *Weltanschauung*: "Battle, drunkenness, rage, and sex are among the best means of liberation, but one other way remains, and perhaps the most important: art. Like drunkenness and sex, dancing is a means of losing oneself to find oneself...." Or: "Violent experiences lift a man out of himself into union with God. God himself is irrational fury, the 'there' where all opposites fuse...." This kind of thing, along with Yeats' views on sex and his approval of "the Tentric practice of *sahaja*" (namely withheld orgasm for the sake of transfiguration into the divine) merely serve to blind one to the fact that Yeats was capable of writing *Among School Children* or *The Municipal Gallery Revisited*. Similarly, though more originally, Eliot is seen from the angle of his having written *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley*. This is good in so far as it emphasises Eliot's intense subjectivism, ramifying as it does into his theories of culture, but less good in so far as the poems are once more almost secondary. The account of "the recovery of Christian immanence," for instance, in *The Four Quartets* strikes one as scrappy, Miller seeming to take the word for the deed. After Father Lynch's lucid account of the unresolved dichotomies in the *Quartets* in his *Christ and Apollo* it is scarcely possible to go on ignoring them or to

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see Eliot's version of "immanence" without reservations.

Conrad apart, the best sections of *Poets of Reality* prove to be those on Stevens and Williams. Why we should take Dylan Thomas (sandwiched between Eliot and Stevens) as seriously as Yeats or Eliot never appears in Miller's study of the structure of Thomas' poems. For once more Miller ignores the question of whether they are convincing as aesthetic wholes, putting the stress on intentions and on the effectiveness of isolated lines or passages, explained in relation to those intentions, rather than in relation to the poems in which they occur. The same could be said, in places, of the Stevens and Williams chapters, but as these are poets for whom intention and achievement more nearly coincide than for Thomas, the result is far less damaging. Miller is particularly good on the veerings of Stevens' point of view—well explored in his account of the poet's oscillation between distrust and trust of metaphor—and the chapter on Williams, with all one's qualifications made, is perhaps the best essay of its kind that we have.

The hardest thing in the world is to be fair to a critic of Miller's verve and originality. As with McLuhan the difficulty comes in deciding at what point the far-ranging view is contradicted by minute particulars. Thus, in an interesting passage on the flatness of modern painting in the work of Rothko and Kline "as opposed to the romantic depth in the work of Paul Klee," one finds oneself taken by the insight but forced to protest. For there are at least two modes of painting in Kline, the hieroglyphic one of, say, *Cardinal* (1950) and the far more romantic one of *Lehigh* (1956), the latter with its echoes of Turner and Albert Pinkham Ryder bringing in a reference of depth beside which Klee's own work, particularly his late work, looks flat in the extreme. Such an instance seems characteristic of Miller and it lands one also with the unanswered question of whether flatness (a feature for Miller of recovered reality where we have no Beyond of traditional idealism) is somehow aesthetically *better* than depth. With its very American air that art is at last getting somewhere, *Poets of Reality* leaves the reader with mixed feelings, among which gratitude and exasperation fight for the upper hand.

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PRESS

What to do about "Libel"?

The stupendous Fourth Estate, whose wide world-embracing influences what eye can take in?...

THOMAS CARLYLE: *"On Boswell's Life of Johnson"* (1832)

LORD FRANCIS-WILLIAMS, in proposing a qualified privilege for newspapers involved in libel suits [ENCOUNTER, September 1967], is only too conscious of his minority view. The public (as he recognises) is unwilling to concede any special legal protections to the Press, even if it were persuaded that some benefit would accrue by removing inhibitions on the dissemination of news affecting the public weal. Whatever the benefits, a protection of qualified privilege would, so the argument runs, make editors careless (or rather, carefree) of the protection from libels on innocent citizenry. Innocent victims of libel arouse deeper concern among commentators than does the failure of the Press to perform its prime function of purveying news [Sir Linton Andrews, ENCOUNTER, November 1967].

My sympathies are divided in equal proportions. I am conscious of the inability of newspapers to winkle out for public scrutiny the things about which, few would deny, the public has a right to know—for example, the spate of frauds (not to mention gangsterism) which has in recent years disfigured our society. I am acutely aware, however, that the instrument of the Press can be damaging even beyond the point of monetary compensation which libel juries can, and do, award. And I am not as sanguine as Lord Francis-Williams that any qualified privilege such as he proposes would create "a climate of trust" which would stem the flow of copy damaging individual reputations without real justification. Something more than a concession of this order needs to be made to inculcate in the Press a higher degree of responsibility.

Press demands for fewer legal inhibitions on its activities, on the one hand, and the protection of the individual from being libelled on the other, might appear antithetic and irresoluble in terms of legal rules. But I do not think we need despair. If the injuries inflicted on individuals by wounding statements in the Press can be divided into those where legitimate public interest properly belongs, and those restricted to matters of personal conduct devoid of anything but prurient curiosity, a line of resolution begins to open up. I will not beat about the bush, but will seek to reason out my proposals notwithstanding the shock which they will undoubtedly induce, even in the readers of ENCOUNTER.

THE REMEDY? *Abolish totally the civil action of damages for defamatory statements, and substitute an action for the invasion of the right to privacy.* In other words, leave the Press (and indeed all publications) free to publish matters of public interest, unencumbered by any threats of suits for libel; but place a much firmer control (by way of a damper) on the publication of matter not within the public domain. This would seem to me to restore the right kind of balance between legitimate and illegitimate Press treatment. It would emphasise the educative and informative function of the Press and minimise its purpose as a medium of entertainment (better left to radio and television).

Abolition of the civil action would go much further than Lord Francis-Williams' proposed qualified privilege (or that proposed by Lord Shawcross, ENCOUNTER, December 1967). The detractors of my proposal would immediately reply that the absence of a legal remedy to the defamed for defamatory remarks would be tantamount to "a licence to tell lies." This riposte must be faced squarely. My proposal would not be an invitation to Editors to indulge themselves in such gross irresponsibility; indeed it would be a plea to them to use their new-found freedom responsibly and for the public good. In ferreting out the ill-doers in our society, both politically and socially, the Editors would have to weigh up the personal damage done in the process. For overstepping the bounds of editorial propriety there would be one major sanction that already exists; and I would propose a second.

Every libel uttered today not only gives the defamed the right to damages but is also technically a crime. A prosecution is feasible if the defamatory words are published with intent to injure the person and thereby are calculated to provoke a breach of the peace. Prosecutions for criminal libel are obsolescent, largely (although not entirely) because at present the civil action provides the victim (and the public) with an adequate remedy. But once the civil action had disappeared there would be room for some resuscitation of the criminal prosecution by the prosecuting authorities.

LOUIS BLOM-COOPER, *until 1963 legal correspondent of the* Guardian *and the* Observer, *is a practising lawyer and an academic.*

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THE NEWLY-CREATED OFFENCE in the Race Relations Act of 1965—incitement to racial hatred—is an indication of public willingness both to fill the lacuna in English law of there being no remedy for group libel and a need to invoke criminal sanctions against the pedlars of literature most inimical to racial harmony. The prosecution of James Caunt, the editor of *The Morecambe & Heysham Visitor*, in 1947, for seditious libel would not fail under the 1965 Act. Caunt wrote at the time of the Stern gang's activities in Palestine that "if British Jewry is today suffering from the righteous wrath of British citizens, then they have only themselves to blame for their passive inactivity. Violence may be the only way of bringing them to a sense of their responsibility to the country in which they live."

Prosecutions for criminal libel are not entirely unknown today. In January 1960 the publishers and editor-in-chief of the *Adelaide News* were charged with seditious and criminal libel. The charges arose out of the publication of posters and headlines making allegations against members of a Royal Commission investigating the case of a part-aborigine convicted of murder in South Australia; the members of the Royal Commission included the Chief Justice of South Australia, and editors and publishers were not wholly immune from legal process for defamatory publications.

The sense of editorial responsibility, induced by removing the shackles of civil libel actions, should be buttressed by the fiercer sanction of criminal proceedings for any outrageous and unjustified libels. It might be that the law of criminal libel is at present too narrowly drawn, in that the ingredient of the offence (there must be an intention to provoke a breach of the peace) is unrealistic in a society where the individual does not, so readily as his ancestors, resort to violent response.

The second sanction, which might require legislation, is that anyone aggrieved by a defamatory remark should have a right of reply. Currently, the British Press Council in its *informal* way imposes this duty on the Press; but it might be wise to give the defamed person a statutory right of reply. This would, to some extent, lay low the bogey that my proposal will simply result in licensing the telling of lies. As Mr. Justice Holmes said, in one of his famous dissenting opinions (in *Abrams* v. *United States*, 1919): "... the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market...." The iniquity of Press untruths at present is that, by and large, they go unchallenged and, in consequence, increase in their effect upon the public mind. If the victim's reply were entitled to equal prominence, the reader would be in a position to choose between evenly competing voices.

THESE PROPOSALS will, of course, operate only in the public domain where the matters published are within the definition of public interest. Detractors of the proposals for a right of privacy have claimed that it is not possible to define with any degree of precision what is and is not a matter of public interest. But, as with the elephant, most of us recognise the animal when we see it, even if we are incapable of reducing our judgment to the point of pure legal draftsmanship. Publishing the facts of the sex life of a Minister of the Crown would not be "a matter of public interest" giving the publisher immunity; revealing the fact that a Prime Minister had "gone off his rocker" and that decisions of State are being made by his wife would clearly fall within the immunity. In any event, serious newspapers today are constantly having to make decisions about "publishability" on just these kinds of lines. And courts should not find it impossibly difficult to decide where the line, however jagged it might become as a result of case-law, has to be drawn. A tentative step in the direction of discrimination between public and private matter was made in *Argyll* v. *Argyll* (1965). There the court held that the marriage relationship demanded protection for communications between husband and wife so as to stop a Sunday newspaper, *The People*, publishing a series on the private life of the Duchess of Argyll. On the reverse side of the coin, a right of an ex-employee to communicate confidential information of great public moment to the Press was recently upheld by the Court of Appeal. In *Initial Services, Ltd.* v. *Putterill* (1967), a former employee of a firm of launderers supplying towels for use in machines handed information to the *Daily Mail* indicating restrictive practices in the laundry business contrary to the Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1956. When sued for delivery up of confidential papers and for an injunction restraining further communication to the Press, the ex-employee pleaded that the employers' right to impose an obligation on a servant (or former servant) not to disclose information or documents received in confidence could not extend to any business practice which in the public interest ought to be publicly known and discussed. The Court declined to accede to the laundry firm's request to "strike out" the defence. Far from refusing to drive the ex-employee from the judgment seat, the Court even thought that the defence had a reasonable prospect of success —a modern recognition of the overriding duty of a citizen to expose public misconduct, and a corresponding right in the Press to receive and publish matters of public interest.

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The demarcation between private and public matter is a vital ingredient of the Right of Privacy, which has as many proponents as a qualified privilege for newspapers has its detractors. Proposals for it abound. Recently (at a Scandinavian conference of the International Commission of Jurists) lawyers warmly endorsed a new set of legal principles; and the Commission's British branch *Justice* is organising its own investigative committee—a kind of legal feasibility study. Parliamentarians are not averse to trying their hand at law-making in this field. There have recently been intimations that the attempt in 1961 at legislation by Lord Mancroft will be repeated in the near future.

Not so long ago—on 13 March 1961—Lord Mancroft obtained a second reading in the House of Lords by 74 votes to 21 for his Right of Privacy Bill. The idea was pooh-poohed by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Kilmuir, as impracticable. But events and public attitudes since then have tended to disregard even the douche administered by a government's chief legal adviser. Lord Mancroft's Bill proposed giving a right of action to anybody whose personal affairs or conduct were related by any form of mass media without the owner's consent. Directed, as it was, primarily to the Press and television, it generously proffered three defences: (1) if the publisher genuinely did not intend to refer to the individual suffering from the relaying of the information; or (2) the occasion was privileged, *e.g.*, was a report of Parliamentary or judicial proceedings; or (3) both the individual and published matter were subjects of reasonable public interest—it is at this point that the new right coalesces with the proposed residual rules relating to libel.

The great benefit to be derived from this substituted form of civil action is that one gets out of the Hatred-Ridicule-and-Contempt syndrome. It is *enough* if the individual's personal life has been intruded upon. It depends on a factual situation and not on a jury's or judge's opinion of "damage to reputation." Furthermore, the inviolability of private life could not be penetrated on the ground that what was revealed was the unvarnished truth. This is an area where veracity or untruth is irrelevant. Many legal systems—but not the English one—have imported to a limited extent this concept into their libel laws by demanding that any plea of justification of the libel (*i.e.*, that it is true) must be accompanied by a plea of public interest. Whereas in English law truth is a defence, in these systems truth, as a defence by itself, is no defence. (The old adage that "the greater the truth, the greater the libel" was only a correct statement of libel in the English criminal law.)

THE NEW RIGHT of action for the invasion of privacy would set the seal on a fundamental principle of the citizen's right to be left in peace. The English courts have always recognised that an Englishman's home is his castle, impregnable even to the police in execution of their duties unless armed with a warrant. While the courts have firmly bolted the front door even to constituted authority, they seem to have countenanced access through the back door to the idle and prurient curiosity of those uncontrolled by the law. That route could now be blocked, at the same time conceding the need for governmental doors to be opened more readily to scrutiny of all public activity. Thus the whole emphasis of the purveying of news could be changed: switched away from the material that fills the gossip columns to the increasing need of the public to know what in our society is being done in its name, and for which others are publicly accountable.

Only in this way could the Press claim, with justification, to be performing effectively its role as the Fourth Estate of the realm.

Louis Blom-Cooper

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LETTERS

"A Case for Treatment"

I HAVE READ Goronwy Rees' article on "Lytton Strachey's World." I have already reviewed Michael Holroyd's biography at length for the *New Statesman* and do not wish to repeat myself. But as regards the specific question which Mr. Rees asks of me: Why I did not mention the fact that some of my friends were homosexuals my answer would be:

1. not being a homosexual myself it was irrelevant to my relation to them;
2. it was irrelevant to the subjects treated by me in my autobiography;
3. when I wrote, it was still unusual to reveal facts which might be painful to living people unless it was absolutely vital to mention them.

LEONARD WOOLF

Monk's House,
Rodmell, Lewes,
Sussex

Gore Vidal and the Professors

SPEAKING AS A member of that unholy fraternity of dogged English teachers who "do research, publish learned findings, make breakthroughs in F. Scott Fitzgerald," I am frankly sick and tired of hearing my profession accused by novelists like Gore Vidal in your December issue of being responsible for the undergraduate's dislike of reading, because of "the laborious way in which novels are taught: the slow killing of the work through a close textual analysis."

I very seriously doubt that any significant work of art, be it novel, poem, or drama, has ever been spoiled or depreciated by a close analysis or examination in the classroom. If anything, the great works (like *Don Quixote, The Divine Comedy, The Brothers Karamazov, Hamlet, Moby Dick,* or *Ulysses*) are elucidated by and in some cases require a careful and painstaking consideration of the separate elements of style, structure, and theme before the total work can be grasped in its integrity and magnificence. Unfortunately, we are not all blessed with an automatic knowledge at birth of what may constitute a literary masterpiece. If the class is sincerely conducted, students will inevitably come away with increased admiration for a work of art which they may revisit with continuing pleasure. If the work is spoiled or appears flawed under such scrutiny, then perhaps the fault lies with the artist, not the analyst. Given the encounter of a good student with a good novel, there is very little the teacher can do anyway to influence or alter the educative experience which results.

Very often, the reading habits for a person's lifetime are formed in the classroom, or an insatiable appetite for the works of a particular writer or genre is initiated. And how much richer is the modern reader's appreciation of such contemporary works as *Catcher in the Rye, Howl,* or *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?,* if they can be read with an understanding of their technical and artistic roots in *Huckleberry Finn, Leaves of Grass,* and *Waiting for Godot.* I think I can safely predict that if tomorrow all courses in American literature were abolished from all colleges and universities, most of the books by the major writers (Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, Whitman, and Dickinson) would disappear from the shelves of bookstores and probably from most people's memories —a sad but likely prediction. The same, in time, would happen to Faulkner, Wolfe, and Hemingway. I don't believe their fate would be a just or deserved one, but many a member of the captive collegiate audience has approached an assigned reading task with reluctance only to be struck down by the lightning of an exciting reading experience. It may well be that the classroom is the last stronghold against the onslaught of what McLuhan calls the post-Gutenberg era.

ONE HATES TO MENTION the commercial side of the issue, but I wonder how large a part of the 5% of the population considered habitual readers (Mr. Vidal's figures) is represented by the undergraduate doing reading for a course. I'm fairly certain that the college market figures largely in the success of most publishing houses today, and a single adoption of a novel in certain courses could do wonders for an author's pocket-book. At the large Midwestern university where I teach, an adoption of a novel by my department could mean the automatic sale of between 7 and 8,000 copies, such is the enrolment in our course.

I know we are a black-hearted lot, we professors of English, but I have never in my career encountered a teacher, no matter how intelligent or mediocre he might be, who, as Vidal reports, "is prone to regard the object of analysis as being somehow inferior to the analysis itself." Really, Mr. Vidal is taking the teacher of literature much more seriously than the teacher takes himself.

I am not suggesting that Mr. Vidal and the members of his craft should feel gratitude to the professor. We only ask that we be left alone to do as best we can what we earnestly believe in—impart to the receptive mind a love for the enduring pleasures of sensitive and intelligent reading—without being partially held responsible for the death of the novel. If it's dying (and I myself doubt that), it's dying in the hands of the writers who prefer to spend their time sniping at the academy instead of producing creative literature.

M. THOMAS INGE

Fulbright Lecturer in American Literature,
University of Salamanca,
Spain

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Fitzgerald's "Omar Khayyam"

I SHOULD like to comment on a few points arising from Anthony Burgess' article "Graves and Omar" [ENCOUNTER, January]. In an otherwise well-balanced discussion, particularly of Robert Graves' actual translation of the *Rubaiyat*, Mr. Burgess asserts no less categorically than Messrs. Graves and Ali Shah that "it has been known for a long time that Fitzgerald traduced Omar Khayyam, misrepresenting his philosophy through ignorance."

This is by no means the established fact the anti-Fitzgerald faction maintain: despite the contention of Fitzgerald's rival, M. Nicolas, and most Indian Muslims, that Omar was a Sufi Poet whose verses must be interpreted in the light of the allegorical imagery of mystic love, many eminent scholars and critics, both Western and Iranian, have argued cogently that Omar was primarily a poet of rationalist pessimism, a sceptical scientist whose images—whether inspired by orthodox Islamic tenets or by Sufi lore—are incidental rather than intrinsic, a convenient vehicle for his profound intellectual cynicism rather than statements of personal faith or mystical experience. There is even evidence that Khayyam's quatrains were abhorrent to certain Sufis: Najm-ul-Din Razi, a Sufi writing about a century after Omar's death, condemns the *Rubaiyat* in his *Mirsad-ul-'Ibad* as materialistic heresy quite incompatible with Sufism. It is, of course, perfectly possible that later Sufis have viewed the work in an entirely different light and have, as Omar Ali Shah states, been using the *Rubaiyat* for study and meditation. But does such a selective appreciation make the historical Omar any more a Sufi than it makes, say, Robert Burns a Communist?

It is likewise unfair to represent Fitzgerald "when his ignorance was shown up . . . persisting obstinately in his traduction." Fitzgerald seems to have been a good deal more perceptive and open-minded than many of his attackers. He refused to see Omar's thematically inconsistent quatrains as entirely either black or white, replying fairly that "No doubt many of these Quatrains seem unaccountable unless mystically interpreted; but many more as unaccountable unless literally." This is as obvious to anyone reading the *Rubaiyat* today as it was to Fitzgerald a century ago. There can never be adequate justification either for taking Omar absolutely literally, thus branding him an atheistic libertine babbling in his cups, or for insisting on a completely mystical interpretation whether it makes sense or not, and effectively denying that anyone can be a hard-drinking, free-thinking agnostic without this being a particularly subtle cover for a dyed-in-the-wool Sufi.

JOHN PERRY

Pembroke College,
Cambridge

Newspapers & Readers

A Reply — By CHRISTOPHER DRIVER

I ORIGINALLY drafted the piece entitled "Why Newspapers Have Readers" (ENCOUNTER, November) when it seemed for a time that my own newspaper might not have any readers for very much longer. No doubt the emotional effects of that period justify Mr. Clive Irving in calling my views "muddled" (ENCOUNTER, March), though I doubt if it also justifies Mr. John Beavan in calling them "hedonistic" (ENCOUNTER, February). A little more hedonism might help the *Guardian*, of course, and I therefore foster it where I can—noticing that in these degenerate times, the pleasure principle is not entirely foreign to Mr. Beavan's *Daily Mirror*. But perception of truth or the best available approximation can also be a kind of pleasure, and it is an educational maxim, better understood today than it was in C. P. Scott's time, that people tend to learn not so much what they are told but what they take pleasure in learning. For instance, until very recently a major difference between the *Times* and the *Guardian* was that the latter was a pleasure to read and the former a duty; and I suspect that in consequence, despite the serious gaps in the *Guardian*'s news coverage, its readers as a whole would have been more likely to pass an *A*-level examination in current affairs than the *Times*' would have been. The *Times*' present effort to reverse this position merely strengthens the argument. Mr. Rees-Mogg, I am sure, wants his customers' minds as well as their money.

Mr. Irving, when he was working for the *Sunday Times*, recognised (like successful journalists of other periods) that newspaper-readers were in a mood to have their information mixed and packaged differently, and was lucky enough to be allowed to act on his perception. But even his natural dislike of having his product compared with the pornographic staple of other Sunday papers does not prevent him from acknowledging the element of voyeurism present in the very act of reading the papers, whose pictures from Saigon and peepshows from Cabinet Rooms perform very much the function performed in other centuries by Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.

I stand by the analogy. The appetite for pornography is generally held to be strongest in those readers whose own opportunity for sexual participation is limited or non-existent. The appetite for

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instant history has burgeoned in a generation whose chance of influencing the events it reads about is felt to be minimal. It would be surprising if this had not affected the character of newspapers. When the quality papers were, as Mr. Beavan puts it, "the house organs of the Establishment," they were read by a higher proportion of people with a practical interest in the twists and turns of politics and diplomacy. Now, read by millions, they are indispensable to few. When Scott and Garvin ruled, the daily and weekly press was not only the quickest public source of information; it was also (thanks to the gentlemanly pace of English publishing and the backwardness of English education, public and private) the best available primer in current affairs. To borrow grocer's language, the papers once had shelf-life as well as tingling freshness. Today they have neither. These developments, coupled with the quality papers' humiliating dependence on ad-men who care not a hoot about its content, have had a subtly demoralising effect on journalists except for those, like Mr. Beavan, who have managed to insulate themselves against the cold cultural currents running beneath them.

INSULATED THUS, an orthodox national newspaperman can still regard "news" as a commodity which drips from the agency tape like latex, needing only collection and processing for uncritical consumption. He easily forgets that mere events are nothing until someone's curiosity and intelligence have operated to make them meaningful or at least entertaining. Similarly, he can still see the leader columns as the place where the newspaper, self-defined as an island of calm in a sea of anarchy, guides the thinking of lesser breeds. But the modern reader has to be persuaded rather against his will (see the *Times*' current advertising) that a leader is any more interesting and important than the individual who writes it. Often, of course, anonymity and stylistic blight make it less interesting.

It is difficult for any journalist with a family to feed to sniff at the classified and prestige display advertising which in recent years has fattened up the serious papers. None of us wants to be reminded that we dare not charge an economic price for our product, or that fundamental decisions about our work—what size and type of readership shall be aimed at, how much editorial space there shall be for what subjects at which seasons—are taken in deference to marketing men for whom the existence of newspapers is a convenience not a concern. And in the hectic flush of illusory prosperity, no one has been compelled to decide what the essence of a newspaper is, in distinction from younger media; what it can still do supremely well; and what serious people would still pay shillings for even at a time when almost half the population "rely on television more than on newspapers to give them information about what is going on in the world." (Jeremy Isaacs, ENCOUNTER, March).

CERTAINLY, TELEVISION REPORTING has a long way to go before it can match the effect of having good reporters on the ground in Viet Nam, and part of the point of getting the concept of a modern newspaper right is to create a situation in which that kind of service would be possible without hidden subsidy. (At 6d., the *Times* makes a seven-figure and the *Guardian* a six-figure loss.)

But there are further, more seriously neglected types of service open to a newspaper. I originally suggested, and Mr. Irving seems to agree, that a good library was worth six reporters to a newspaper, because television, good at depicting actuality, could not find the time to present the fruits of elaborate editorial research facilities even if it knew how to grow them. Serious newspapers, publishing the equivalent of a full-length novel every night, easily could. Perhaps in the process they would evolve a new breed of researcher-reporter, capable of coupling the resources of a good library with a professional nose for topicality and artful presentation. But since I wrote, the figures for newspaper library staffing given in the Economist Intelligence Unit report on Fleet Street have told their own story—57 persons at the *Express*, not a paper noted for its exploration of complex issues, 33 at the *Telegraph*, 22 at the *Times*, 14 at the *Financial Times*, and 12 at the *Guardian*. How serious is serious?

"O Jerusalem . . ."

MR. CHRISTOPHER SYKES, in his article "Holy City" in your February issue, makes some sweeping pronouncements about the problems of the Middle East and, incidentally, about the role of "UNO" (as he likes to call the United Nations) in that area. For one who warns in his opening paragraph against "adopting a priggish attitude of 'superiority'," he makes some stern judgments.

I do not wish to touch on the main substance of Mr. Sykes' article, but as a member of the United Nations Secretariat who has for many years had something to do with United Nations efforts in the Middle East, I would like to comment on his ill-informed remarks about the Secretary-General, the withdrawal of UNEF and the role of the United Nations in the Jerusalem problem. Nothing is perfect, especially in Arab-Israel relations, but that is no reason for ignoring the realities of a situation and creating a mythology in order to bolster a particular position.

Mr. Sykes believes that "so far as Israel and Jordan are concerned the organisation [the United Nations] should face the facts and include itself out." That is certainly a point of view, although whether it would commend itself to the governments in the Security Council or the General Assembly (who take the decisions on such matters), or even to the governments immediately involved, is problematical. The United Nations involvement in the Middle East is easy to criticise—and useful for that reason among others—but the condition for writing it off ought to be the suggestion of a more effective substitute. It is also well to remember the circumstances in which the United Nations

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came to be "included" into the Palestine problem by the exit of the mandatory power, leaving behind no governmental authority and widespread fighting in the Holy Land. I wonder really, remembering the past, whose interests would be served if the United Nations were to "include itself out" of this situation at the present juncture—certainly not British interests.

Mr. Sykes rehearses the convenient and well-worn fantasy of the "flight of its [the UN's] army —without even staying to argue the point—at Nasser's request" and proceeds to a number of lofty insults about the Secretary-General. This may make for snappy reading, but it also displays a very serious ignorance of the hard facts of international life in general and of the nature and basis of United Nations peace-keeping efforts in particular. The withdrawal of UNEF is too complex a subject to go into in detail here, but it is fair to say that most governments, however reluctantly, now agree that for over-riding legal, constitutional, and practical reasons, U Thant had no feasible alternative whatsoever to withdrawing UNEF, once he had ascertained that the Government of the United Arab Republic was not prepared to reconsider its demand for UNEF's withdrawal and that Israel was not prepared to have the Force on the Israel side of the Line. UNEF was not, and never could have been, an occupation force, let alone a fighting army. It was a peace force acting as a buffer, stationed entirely on UAR-controlled territory on the basis of the voluntary acceptance of the UAR. There was thus, in fact, no viable argument and no practical support for any other course of action than that which U Thant took. That this inescapable and difficult decision made U Thant a handy scapegoat for those who were unprepared to face the Middle Eastern crisis, and for some who are still unprepared, is perhaps more of an indictment of them than of him.

As FAR AS Jerusalem is concerned, Mr. Sykes says magisterially, "UNO has had its chance and muffed it." The situation in Palestine bequeathed to the United Nations in May 1948 by the British Government, and especially the prevailing situation in Jerusalem, was indeed a splendid "chance," whose infinite obduracy has steadily increased over the intervening 20 years. "That they [UN] rarely had both sides against them," is not a good enough basis for solving on the international or the local level a problem as controversial and as passionately disputed as the status of Jerusalem. Certainly the United Nations has not solved it, but it has tried and goes on trying. Can Mr. Sykes suggest another agency or arrangement which might do better?

Nor is it clear what entity this "UNO," to which Mr. Sykes constantly refers, really is. The United Nations is not a world government or a supranational authority in any sense, and it is pointless to talk about it as if it was. The matter is far more complicated than that, and it will be difficult to make progress toward a reliable international order until serious people put aside such simplistic notions. The future development of a useful international organisation requires a genuine and deep understanding of the present difficulties experienced by governments, and, of course, by the Secretary-General, in trying to make the United Nations work in crises where it presents the only hope of a solution—difficulties which include conflicts of policy, problems of sovereignty and clashing interests. Huffing and puffing about "UNO" is a form of escapist journalism which one normally finds elsewhere than in the columns of ENCOUNTER.

BRIAN URQUHART

United Nations,
New York

I AM SORRY to have annoyed Mr. Urquhart so much, and to have described the UN as UNO. I will not repeat the second offence.

I would like to be converted to faith in UN but Mr. Urquhart does not seem to me to go the right way about it. He says "I would like to comment on his [my] ill-informed remarks about the Secretary General, the withdrawal of UNEF and the role of the United Nations in the Jerusalem problem." Now my remarks about the Secretary General were made solely with reference to the withdrawal of UNEF, but on that subject Mr. Urquhart's comment, to which I had been looking forward with great excitement, is that it is too complex "to go into detail" about it, but that most governments agree now that the withdrawal was the right action, and that once Israel and the UAR refused to co-operate, there was nothing to do but bolt. All this boils down, in the absence of the details, to insistence that one must not question UN Secretarial decisions. It is positively wrong, "huffing and puffing" and "escapist," to consider that U Thant's performance on that occasion was ridiculous.

I dare say it was not, but if we are to persist in belief in UN, then the conduct of a Secretary-General at a crisis involving the issue of war and peace must not only not be ridiculous but must be seen to be not ridiculous. The second condition was not fulfilled.

As regards the role of the UN in Jerusalem Mr. Urquhart's comment amounts to nothing but a familiar hard-luck story. With the hard-luck story I agree fully, but was hoping to be told just how UN saved the situation from becoming worse. I am only scolded and told to accept the situation or think up a better agency.

When an agency responsible for international relationships has muffed it, it is difficult indeed to think of what shall replace it. Hence the gravity of U Thant having appeared ridiculous to ordinary, crude, unspecialised opinion, even if in reality he was not ridiculous at all in May and June of last year. But it is really up to Mr. Urquhart to devote less space to chortling over my tiny lapse, and telling me to behave, and more (perhaps all) to telling us just why our faith in the UN should not be shaken by the shooing off, why U Thant could not have obtained a UN session to debate the matter and appeal for support of UNEF, and what, if the UN's prestige is to remain intact, the UN contribution to a solution is likely to be.

CHRISTOPHER SYKES

London

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"Seduction"

I COMMENTED [ENCOUNTER, September]—it seems in unconscious "hysteria"—on a character in a poem and on the act he describes himself, unambiguously, as committing. "It appals me as a critic" that my words are misread. That the character and the author are both university teachers is a coincidence not of my making. And it is news to me that to marry is "to exceed the bounds of decorum."

JOHN C. BRYCE

The University,
Glasgow

MR. BRYCE has shifted his ground. He no longer accuses me of improper conduct; and this, in the face of facts, is wise of him. Now he speaks merely of "coincidence" between my profession and what he presumes is that of one of my characters. From allegation we move to smear.

Surely it is obvious that even the most primitive intentionalist could not extrapolate from text to biography in this way? If Bryce had cared to read the poem, he would have seen that the love-relationship was described in metaphorical terms, and was not condoned but regretted—"it was for this your teacher ran *amock*," "truth *lies*," etc. But he was not concerned to explicate but to denounce. I wish I could believe his original letter was not yet another manifestation of academic ill-will towards creative writers. Readers will no doubt draw their own conclusions.

PHILIP HOBSBAUM

The University,
Glasgow

Past ENCOUNTERS

HANS DELBRÜCK *told his countrymen in the aftermath of the first "total war": "Let them do as they will with us; there is one thing they cannot do: kill us." We know better now. We are in an age of total barbarism in which the extermination of a race, class, or group is all in the day's work. The extermination of the Armenians by the Turks in the First World War was taken as a sign of congenital barbarism. We are all in the same moral boat now.*

D. W. BROGAN

A RECENT BOOK *of memoirs by a contemporary of Lloyd George refers to him as a person whose lowly origins and circumstances rendered him unsuited for admission to the highest councils of the state, an opinion which can be applied with yet greater force to the case of Napoleon Bonaparte. It is perhaps only in England that such ideas can be expressed without meeting anger or ridicule in a prohibitive measure. The belief that the gentleman uses power with more conscience than the self-made man persists widely and vigorously in spite of much heated opposition. English class-feeling is strengthened by a deep moral feeling that is missing from this kind of reaction elsewhere. As a result it can play a profound part in shaping British destinies.*

CHRISTOPHER SYKES

SUICIDE *among writers in various countries during the past thirty years has reached an unparalleled figure. It seems to me that however much they may differ outwardly, the majority of these episodes have a common source: what Nietzsche called the nihilism of modern times. Whenever I happen to consider the sense of bewilderment, tedium, and disgust characteristic of our age, my mind turns not to the books of Heidegger, Jaspers, and Sartre but to the suicides of Essenin, Mayakovsky, Ernst Toller, Kurt Tucholsky, Stefan Zweig, Klaus Mann, Drieu La Rochelle, F. C. Mathiessen, Cesare Pavese, and other lesser-known figures. What a flock of terrifying ghosts! Persecution, exile, isolation, poverty, illness, abnormality—one or other of these external reasons has been suggested in each case to explain how a man of talent could have sought such a desperate end. But the last writings of these men before death, or their last confidences to their friends, are invariably a confession of anguish or despair at the effort and the futility of living.*

IGNAZIO SILONE

WHOEVER *speaks the American language is forced into romanticism. His strictest discipline is itself a spiritual oddity, and gives birth to an oddity as witness* The Scarlet Letter, *Emily Dickinson, the early gas engine. The American landscape is not easily mistaken for an endless wallpaper of nymphs and fountains—in the American language it takes hard application to achieve academic deadness. Precisely the fact that it gives them something to do and keeps them out of trouble is perhaps what makes the filing cabinets of tradition so desirable to the morally insecure.*

HAROLD ROSENBERG

WHEN NAPOLEON *said,* "J'aime le pouvoir comme artiste," *he was giving expression to an attitude towards politics which Machiavelli was the first to formulate. He preferred a more solemn analogy of himself as a* medico politico; *but it comes to the same thing. Art and medicine and all of natural science have it in common that, in medieval terminology, they do not require "rectitude of the appetite." They are judged only by results. An artist may be a lecher and a murderer, a surgeon may be a sadist—this is irrelevant to the judgment one passes on their work. But is it irrelevant to the work of the statesman? Since Machiavelli we have come to think so; which is why modern politics—*all *of modern politics—is managerial to the core.*

IRVING KRISTOL

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Michael Beloff's *The Plateglass Universities* will be published by Secker & Warburg in the autumn....

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Muriel Spark's *Collected Stories* and *Collected Poems 1967* were published last year by Macmillan....

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Washington

A PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT *of a closed-door literary trial in Moscow includes what is described as the final plea of Vladimir Bukovsky, a writer who challenged a Soviet court with a spirited defence of the right of Soviet citizens to organise public demonstrations.*

Bukovsky and two other defendants were convicted for taking part in a street demonstration in Moscow. They were protesting against the arrests of editors of an underground literary magazine.

According to the Russian transcript, Bukovsky cited passages of the Soviet constitution specifically guaranteeing freedom of speech and "the right of street processions and demonstrations." Bukovsky told the court: "Freedom of speech and of the press is, first of all, freedom for criticism. Nobody has ever forbidden praise of the Government." N.Y. TIMES

Bonn

KURT BARTEL ("KUBA") *who was regarded as the chief literary ideologist of the East German régime, collapsed and died in Frankfurt last night, after "Maoist" students burst into a meeting which was celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian revolution.*

Artists from the Rostock People's Theatre were reciting from Bartel's lyric poems when about 30 members of the West-German Socialist Students Federation entered the room, carrying red flags and pictures of Mao, Marx, Lenin, and Guevara.

They demanded revolutionary songs instead of poems, and called on the assembly to criticise the Soviet Government. After order had been restored Bartel, who was 53, slumped in his seat and died. A post-mortem examination will take place tomorrow, in the presence of an East German doctor. THE GUARDIAN

Paradise

PARADISE LOST: *Paradise, a small village in Southern Kentucky, is to disappear tomorrow as the last three families move out to make way for a giant steam electric plant. They are the remnants of a community of 800 on the banks of Green River.*

Mrs. Carlos Smith, who has lived in Paradise for 50 years, objects to the move, "The Devil is behind all this. I know it." DAILY TELEGRAPH

Washington

JAMES RESTON'S *quote from Yeats to illustrate McNamara's character does not make sense. The pundit says "McNamara is an intense man" and cites the verse, "The best lack all conviction while the worst are full of passionate intensity." Then he writes: "This, for all Robert McNamara's own 'passionate intensity,' is not to suggest that he despairs for the world...." Does Reston mean McNamara is one of the "worst"? And surely Yeats is expressing scorn in those lines for the "best" as well. More editorial intensity is needed for passionate moralising columnists.* HERALD TRIBUNE

London

TWO *Conservative members of Parliament last night tabled a motion in the Commons which taunted the Minister of Technology on a "humiliating defeat" in accepting the French spelling, Concorde, for the supersonic Anglo-French airliner.*

At the first public showing of the aircraft in Toulouse yesterday Mr. Benn announced that from now on the Concord would be spelled in Britain with a final "e" in the French manner. After all, the Minister explained, "e" stood for Excellence, England, Europe and the Entente. THE TIMES

London

MUTE THAT "E": *the correct reaction of British patriots [writes John Grigg] to the decision to spell "Concorde" the French way is to accept it with a good grace, while making sure that the final "e" is absolutely mute and that the word is pronounced, on this side of the Channel, exactly like its English equivalent. Any failure to sound the "n" in the first syllable, or any fancy articulation of the "r" in the second, should be treated as a social offence.*

And is this not a suitable moment to complete the integration of French words which have recently settled in the English language? The age of the motor car and the aeroplane has brought quite a flood of immigrants, whose presence in our midst should be tolerated, perhaps even welcomed, on condition that they conform to our accent. "Garage" must be pronounced once and for all to rhyme with "carriage," "fuselage" with "tutelage," and "chassis" with "Onassis" (not, I admit, an English word, but pronounced as though it were). Perhaps the Queen might work a number of these words into her speeches, setting the seal of her linguistic authority upon pronunciations which her subjects seem oddly reluctant to adopt. THE GUARDIAN

Paris

IN 1879 *Lord Ronald Gower called on Victor Hugo in Paris. Hugo prophesied that "Europe in the twentieth century will form one great Republic, like the United States, of which, of course, France will be the centre and the governing power; and Paris, of course, the capital.... The English will be the last of the European nations to conform to the Republican Confederation, but sooner or later they will have to do so."*

Now and then, observed Lord Ronald, Hugo spoke "with animation and with eloquence, but his talk is always about 'Moi' and 'les idées glorieuses de la Révolution'—and this after an hour or so begins rather to pall."

Hugo was then 77. Lord Ronald recorded the monologue in My Reminiscences *(1883).* Plus ça change.... THE TIMES

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